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From Domesday Book to the Hundred Rolls: Lordship, Landholding and Local Society in Three English Hundreds, 1066-1280

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**From Domesday Book to the Hundred Rolls: Lordship,
Landholding and Local Society in Three English
Hundreds, 1066-1280**

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King's College London,
University of London

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Abstract

This thesis explores local society, covering the spectrum from the great lords to the heavily dependent peasants. A comparison of Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls enables an assessment of how the structure of landholding altered between 1066 and 1279-1280, and the affect this had on lords and peasants and their positions in local society. Three case study hundreds in different counties are considered, providing the opportunity to consider the confluence of lordship and landscape in shaping the lives of the peasantry. Key themes that are considered are: changes in the relationships between lords and tenants from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries; how these relationships were affected by subinfeudation and fragmentation of lordship; and the relative burdens placed upon peasants, and how this affected the balance of power between lord and tenant. Other factors that could affect the lives of the peasantry are explored, including the impact of the common law on the status of the peasantry and the extent to which this impacted their economic and social position within the local community. Moreover, interactions within local communities themselves (be that vill/manor/hundred) and the increased roles and responsibilities of these communities in royal government are also important themes. How did communities react to the pressures, obligations and opportunities that this provided? To what extent were men from different social and economic groups drawn into local government roles, and how aware were men and women in the localities of government procedure and legislation on a national scale? These questions are all considered in the context of population change and the implications this had for peasant holding size and levels of subsistence.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	5
<i>Abbreviations</i>	6
<i>List of Figures</i>	8
<i>List of Tables</i>	8
Introduction.....	10
1 Lords and Lordship	39
1.1 Lords and Lordship in the time of King Edward	42
1.1.1 Pre-Conquest landholders	42
1.1.2 Pre-Conquest lordship.....	52
1.1.3 Conclusion	57
1.2 Lords and Lordship, 1066-1086.....	58
1.2.1 A ‘tenurial revolution’?.....	60
1.2.2 Post-Conquest lords	68
1.2.3 Conclusion	82
1.3 Late thirteenth-century lords.....	83
1.4 Lordship in the landscape	91
1.5 Conclusion	113
2 The Peasantry.....	117
2.1 The Peasantry and the Norman Conquest.....	122
2.1.1 Terminology.....	123
2.1.2 The Domesday Population	129
2.1.3 Conclusion	145
2.2 The Thirteenth-Century Peasantry	146
2.2.1 Population change.....	147
2.2.2 Manorial structures, 1279-80	158
2.2.3 Terms of tenure and status	172
2.3 The Peasantry: from Domesday to the Hundred Rolls.....	209
2.4 Conclusion	224
3 Communities and Networks.....	226

3.1 The Family Community	229
3.1.1 An Economic Unit	230
3.1.2 Partible Inheritance	231
3.1.3 Family affection and resentment	235
3.1.4 Partners in Crime	238
3.1.5 A family community?	239
3.2 The Manor, Vill and Parish	240
3.2.1 The Manor and the Vill	241
3.2.2 Agricultural Practices	244
3.2.3 Landholding	247
3.2.4 Courts and meetings	248
3.2.5 Units of representation, assessment and obligation	255
3.2.6 The Parish Church	264
3.3 The Hundred	271
3.3.1 Financial Exactions	272
3.3.2 The Hundred Court	279
3.3.3 Inquiries	285
3.3.4 The Hundred Jurors	287
3.4 Beyond the hundred	310
3.4.1 Private Honours and Liberties	310
3.4.2 A 'County Community'?	316
3.4.3 Other Associations	318
3.5 Conclusion	326
Conclusion	329
<i>Appendices</i>	340
<i>Bibliography</i>	358

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Abbreviations

AgHR – *Agrarian History Review*

AHEW – H.E. Hallam (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, ii, 1042-1350 (Cambridge, 1988).

ANS – *Proceedings of the Battle Conference* (1978-81); *Anglo-Norman Studies* (1982-).

ASC – *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

BL – British Library

Bracton – *Bracton de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, ed. G.E. Woodbine (New Haven, 1915-1942).

Buckinghamshire, 1286 – *The Buckinghamshire Eyre of 1286*, ed. L. Boatwright (Amersham, 2006).

CA – King, D.J.C., *Castellarium Anglicanum: An Index and Bibliography of the Castles in England, Wales and the Islands* (New York, 1983).

CChR – Calendar of the Charter Rolls

CCR – Calendar of the Close Rolls

CIPM – Calendar of Inquisitions *Post Mortem*

CRR – *Curia Regis Rolls*

CPR – Calendar of the Patent Rolls

CUL – Cambridge University Library

DBB – F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge, 1897).

EEA – *English Episcopal Acta*

EcHR – *Economic History Review*

EHD – *English Historical Documents*

EHR – *English Historical Review*

FD – *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds*, ed. D.C. Douglas (London, 1932).

Feudal Aids – *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to feudal aids, with other analogous documents preserved in the Public Record Office 1284-1431*, 6 vols. (London, 1899-1920).

FoF Buckinghamshire, i – *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for the county of Buckingham, 7 Richard I to 44 Henry III*, ed. M.W. Hughes (Bedford, 1940).

FoF Buckinghamshire, ii – *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Buckinghamshire, 1259-1307*, ed. A. Travers (Oxford, 1989).

FoF Oxfordshire – *The Feet of Fines for Oxfordshire, 1195-1291*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford, 1930).

GDB – Great Domesday Book

Gesta Stephani – *Gesta Stephani*, ed. K.R. Potter (Oxford, 1976).

Gravesend – *Rotuli Ricardi Gravesend diocesis Lincolniensis*, ed. F.N. Davis (Oxford, 1925).

Grosseteste – *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste episcopi Lincolniensis s.d. MCCCXXXV-MCCCLIII*, ed. F.N. Davis (London, 1913).

HH – *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon: comprising the history of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the accession of Henry II*, ed. T. Forester (London, 1853).

Historical Monuments – *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Cambridge*, ii (London, 1988).

HSJ – *Haskin's Society Journal*

Hugh – *The Rolls of Hugh de Welles, Bishop of Lincoln 1209-1235*, 3 vols., ed. W.P.W. Phillimore (London, 1907-9).

ICC/IE – Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis subicitur Inquisitio Eliensis, ed. N. Hamilton (London, 1876).

Inquests and Indictments – Inquests and Indictments from Late Fourteenth Century Buckinghamshire: The Superior Eyre of Michaelmas 1389 at High Wycombe, ed. L. Boatwright (Chippenham, 1994).

JBS – Journal of British Studies

JMH – Journal of Medieval History

Kalendar – The Kalendar of Abbot Sampson of Bury St. Edmunds and Related Documents, ed. R.H.C. Davis (London, 1954).

Knighton – Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396, ed. and trans. G.H. Martin (London, 1995).

Kosminsky, Agrarian – E.A. Kosminsky, Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century (Oxford, 1956).

Latham – Revised Medieval Latin word-list from British and Irish Sources, ed. R.E. Latham (London, 1965).

LDB – Little Domesday Book

LHP – Leges Henrici Primi, ed. L.J. Downer (Oxford, 1972).

ODNB – Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 2004).

OHLE – J. Hudson, The Oxford History of the Laws of England, ii, 871-1216 (Oxford, 2012).

OV – The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969-1980).

P&P – Past and Present

Pakenham – The Pakenham Cartulary for the Manor of Ixworth Thorpe, Suffolk c.1250-c.1320, ed. S.D. Church (Woodbridge, 2001).

Pinchbeck – The Pinchbeck Register, relating to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, ed. F. Hervey (Brighton, 1925).

RBE – The Red Book of the Exchequer, ed. H. Hall (1896).

RH – Rotuli Hundredorum temp. Henry III and Edward I in Turr' Lond' et in curia receptae scacarri Westm. Asservati, 2 vols. (London, 1818).

Sanders, Baronies – I.J. Sanders, English Baronies: A Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086-1327 (Oxford, 1960).

Suffolk Hundred – A Suffolk Hundred in the year 1283, ed. E. Powell (Cambridge, 1910).

Sutton – The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280-1299, 8 vols., ed. R.M.T. Hill (Hereford, 1948-1986).

TNA – The National Archives

TRE – Tempore Regis Edwardi

TRHS – Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

TRW – Tempore Regis Willelmi

VCH – Victoria County History

Walsham-le-Willows – The Court Rolls of Walsham-le-Willows, 1303-50, ed. R. Lock (Woodbridge, 1998); *The Court Rolls of Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-1399*, ed. R. Lock (Woodbridge, 2002).

Walsingham – The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, i, 1376-1394, ed. and trans. J. Taylor, W.R. Childs, L. Watkiss (Oxford, 2003).

List of Figures

Figure 1	Bunsty Hundred	17
Figure 2	Langtree Hundred	19
Figure 3	The four and a half Chiltern Hundreds	20
Figure 4	Blackbourn double-hundred	22
Figure 5	Blackbourn double-hundred divided into Breckland and High Suffolk regions	23
Figure 6	The division between Blackbourn and Bradmere in Domesday Book	24
Figure 7	Staine Hundred	28
Figure 8	The pre-Conquest estates of Countess Gytha, Burgræd, Edwin and Ulf	49
Figure 9	The estates of Wigot of Wallingford	51
Figure 10	The estates of Engelric the Priest	52
Figure 11	The transfer of property in Bunsty: pre-Conquest landholder to TIC	62
Figure 12	The transfer of property in Bunsty: pre-Conquest commendatory lord to TIC	63
Figure 13	The transfer of property in Blackbourn/Bradmere: pre-Conquest landholder to TIC	64
Figure 14	The transfer of property in Blackbourn/Bradmere: pre-Conquest commendatory lord to TIC	65
Figure 15	The transfer of property in the four and a half Chiltern hundreds	66
Figure 16	The Buckinghamshire estates of Geoffrey de Mowbray, bishop of Coutances	71
Figure 17	The estates of Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux	71
Figure 18	The estates of Miles Crispin	74
Figure 19	The 1086 estates of Abbot Baldwin of St Edmunds	77
Figure 20	The 1086 estates of Abbot Baldwin in St Edmunds' liberty	78
Figure 21	Churches in Swaffham Prior as they are today	98
Figure 22	Leets in Blackbourn/Bradmere	275

List of Tables

Table 1	Pre-Conquest Landholders in Blackbourn/Bradmere	44
Table 2	Pre-Conquest landholders in Bunsty	47
Table 3	Pre-Conquest landholders in Langtree	50
Table 4	Pre-Conquest commendatory lords in Bunsty	55
Table 5	Pre-Conquest commendatory lordship in Blackbourn/Bradmere	56
Table 6	1086 tenants-in-chief in Bunsty	69
Table 7	The landed wealth of the Bunsty tenants-in-chief	72
Table 8	1086 tenants-in-chief in Langtree	74
Table 9	The landed wealth of the Langtree tenants-in-chief	75
Table 10	1086 tenants-in-chief in Blackbourn/Bradmere	79
Table 11	The landed wealth of the Blackbourn/Bradmere tenants-in-chief	80
Table 12	The number of tenants-in-chief in each vill	82
Table 13	Manorial lords in Bunsty, 1279-80	84
Table 14	Manorial lords in Langtree, 1279-80	85
Table 15	Manorial lords in Blackbourn, 1279-80	86
Table 16	The Domesday Peasantry: A Summary of Darby's data	130
Table 17	The Domesday Peasantry: Bunsty hundred	130
Table 18	The Domesday Peasantry: Blackbourn/Bradmere hundred	131
Table 19	The Domesday Peasantry: Langtree hundred	132
Table 20	The Domesday Peasantry: Comparison of the three hundreds	132

Table 21	Population Change in Blackburn/Bradmere	139
Table 22	Percentage change in values from 1066 to 1086: A summary of Welldon Finn's data	142
Table 23	Domesday Values	142
Table 24	Heads of households recorded in Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls	152
Table 25	Kosminsky's Analysis of manorial structures: A Summary	161
Table 26	Analysis of manorial structures: Bunsty Hundred	162
Table 27	Analysis of manorial structures: Langtree Hundred	163
Table 28	Analysis of land type on the abbot of St Edmunds' fee in Blackburn	167
Table 29	Analysis of manorial structures on William de Criketot's two Blackburn manors	168
Table 30	Villein Holdings in the Hundred Rolls: Bunsty Hundred	176
Table 31	The Ratio of labour to money rents on three Bunsty manors	179
Table 32	Freeholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Bunsty Hundred	181
Table 33	Freeholdings and Unfree holdings in Bunsty Hundred compared	181
Table 34	Analysis of peasant holdings in Wykes, Ashfield and Ixworth, Blackburn Hundred	184
Table 35	Villein holdings in Ixworth, Blackburn hundred	186
Table 36	Categories of peasants in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree hundred	190
Table 37	Holding size of the <i>servi custumarii</i> , <i>servi</i> and tenants in <i>villenagio</i> in Langtree	191
Table 38	Rents of the <i>servi custumarii</i> , <i>servi</i> , and tenants in <i>villenagio</i> in Langtree	192
Table 39	Freeholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree Hundred	193
Table 40	Unfree smallholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree Hundred	198
Table 41	A comparison of holding size between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Langtree Hundred	218
Table 42	A comparison of holding size between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Staine Hundred	220
Table 43	The Bunsty Jurors	291
Table 44	The Langtree Jurors	292
Table 45	The Staine Jurors	293
Table 46	The mean holdings of the jurors	294
Table 47	The Blackburn Jurors	299
Table 48	Langtree Jurors: Frequency of Service	303
Table 49	Bunsty Jurors: Frequency of Service	304
Table 50	Blackburn Jurors as witnesses in the Pakenham Cartulary	307

Introduction

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, England experienced extensive change. The Anglo-Saxon elite was practically wiped out after the Norman Conquest, and the disruption and reorganisation that followed the Conquest cannot have failed to impact upon those lower down the social scale. Commendatory and tenurial lordship became more intimately connected, and peasants with previously allodial lands were added to manors and subject to new Norman lords. By the early twelfth century slavery had died out in England, but a high proportion of the peasantry were heavily dependent upon their lords, and economically bound to their lands. Henry II's legal reforms in the twelfth century brought the king's justice to a wider spectrum of society including the lowliest peasants, and drew an increasing number of people into the administration of the kingdom. However, the benefits of these reforms were exclusively preserved for those who were legally free, and the distinction between free and unfree was crystallised by the end of the twelfth century in the laws of villeinage. The population was rapidly increasing across these two centuries, and by the end of the thirteenth century the country was on the edge of a subsistence crisis. There had been extensive subinfeudation and division of holdings at all levels of society. Manors had fragmented; there were more manorial lords, and even the lowliest aspired to trappings of status and lordship. The country had endured periods of turbulence and civil war, most notably during the reigns of Stephen, John and Henry III, that would have increased pressure on resources and caused disruption at every level of society. The survival of returns from two medieval surveys, Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls, provides a unique opportunity for comparison of society across these two centuries. Both provide information about lordship and landholding on an unprecedented scale. This thesis will explore local society as a whole, covering the spectrum from the great lords to the

heavily dependent peasants, in the context of economic, legal and demographic changes across this period.

Domesday Book stands alone as the only record of its kind in the medieval west. The Domesday inquest, commissioned by William the Conqueror, made use of existing administrative structures and documentation, but on a greater scale than ever before. The author of the E text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* bemoaned that the inquiry was so thorough ‘that there was no single hide nor virgate of land, nor indeed (it is a shame to relate but it seemed no shame to him to do) one ox nor one cow nor one pig which was there left out, and not put down in his record’.¹ The returns were abbreviated and re-arranged so the entries were grouped by tenant-in-chief within each county. They were written up into two books: Little Domesday, which covered Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex; and Great Domesday, which contained the rest of the returns.

The Hundred Rolls of 1279-80 are comparable to Domesday in many ways, but for numerous reasons they have never attracted the same level of interest. They are far more detailed than Domesday, and even contain information about the holdings and rents of smallholders. However, the rolls only survive, or perhaps were only ever completed, for a small part of the country. Moreover, those that do survive are preserved as separate rolls for each hundred; they were never copied into a volume equivalent to Domesday, despite the original commission that the findings should ‘be written in books’, and they were not put to any contemporary use.² Whereas Domesday stands out in the eleventh century because of a relative dearth of surviving evidence, the 1279-80 Hundred Rolls represent just a small part of an ‘inquiring culture’, from which a vast amount of records

¹ ASC E s.a. 1085.

² CPR, 1272-81, 342-3; S. Raban, *A Second Domesday? The Hundred Rolls of 1279-80* (Oxford, 2004), 22; D. Roffe, ‘The Hundred Rolls and their antecedents’, *HSJ*, 7 (1995), 182-5.

survive.³ Domesday has been systematically edited and translated on several occasions,⁴ but the Hundred Rolls have not been so well served. The 1818 Record Commission edition of the Hundred Rolls provides a generally accurate transcription of most of the surviving rolls, but it is poorly indexed and the volume includes returns from other inquiries, without always clearly distinguishing between them.⁵ Since its publication, other rolls or copies of rolls have been discovered which either remain unpublished or are published in isolation.⁶ Most of the rolls are preserved at the National Archives, but others are scattered around the country, making systematic use of the returns more difficult. However, Raban's study of the Hundred Rolls, providing historical context and a detailed examination of the material, has made the source infinitely more manageable.⁷

Both surveys, particularly Domesday Book, have been intensively studied.⁸ More recently, technological advances, most notably the use of computer databases and mapping software, have opened up new possibilities in Domesday research.⁹ Kanzaka's 2002 study of peasant rents in the Hundred Rolls illustrates the potential for the use of computer databases in analysis of the data from the 1279-80 returns as well.¹⁰ Despite

³ Raban, *Second Domesday*, 13-36.

⁴ The most notable publications are the Philimore and Alecto editions: *Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris *et al.*, 34 vols (1974-86); *Great Domesday Book*, ed. A. Williams (1986-1992); *Little Domesday Book*, ed. A. Williams (2000).

⁵ *RH*, ii, 321a-877b; Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 7-8, 27-8.

⁶ Raban, *Second Domesday*, 183-9; *The Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279-80*, ed. T. John (Oxford, 1992); *Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls of 1279*, eds. E. Stone and P. Hyde (Oxford, 1968); D.E. Greenway, 'A Newly Discovered Fragment of the Hundred Rolls of 1279-80', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 7 (1982).

⁷ Raban, *Second Domesday*.

⁸ For example: *DBB*; R. Lennard, *Rural England, 1086-1135: A Study of Agrarian Conditions* (Oxford, 1959); V.H. Galbraith, *The Making of Domesday Book* (Oxford, 1964); H.C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977). Also see the rest of Darby's *Domesday Geographies* series for county by county analysis. There are also valuable essay collections: *Domesday Studies*, ed. J.C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987); *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. P. Sawyer (London, 1985); *Domesday Book*, eds. E. Hallam and D. Bates (Stroud, 2001).

⁹ Two notable databases include: Palmer's Domesday Explorer (2009): www.domesday.net; and Baxter's PASE (2010): www.domesday.pase.co.uk

¹⁰ J. Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents in thirteenth-century England: an analysis of the Hundred Rolls of 1279-80', *ECHR*, 55 (2002), 593-618.

this, Kosminsky's *Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the thirteenth century*, published in Russian in 1935 and in English translation in 1956, remains the most substantial study of the Hundred Rolls thus far.¹¹ Kosminsky analysed data from thirty-four hundreds across six counties, containing over half a million acres.¹² He analysed the structures of estates, considering the proportion of demesne, freehold and villein lands, and showed that most manors could not be considered to fit a 'typical' model; rarely did the vill and the manor coincide.¹³

Kosminsky's work remains valuable, but a 'modern re-analysis of this major source is long over-due'.¹⁴ It is particularly surprising that such little comparison between Domesday Book and the 1279-80 survey has been attempted. Kosminsky himself did some comparative work, but his main focus was on the thirteenth-century material.¹⁵ Harley and John both used the surviving Warwickshire Hundred Rolls to chart population change between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls in Stoneleigh and Kineton hundreds.¹⁶ The *Victoria County History* volumes generally make use of Domesday and the Hundred Rolls in their manorial histories, as do some other local studies, but without in depth analysis of structural changes between the two.¹⁷

There are numerous obstacles that make comparison challenging. The two surveys are separated by two centuries characterised by political, economic and demographic

¹¹ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*. See also: E.A. Kosminsky, 'Services and Money Rents in the Thirteenth Century', *EcHR*, 5, 2 (1935), 24-45.

¹² Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 89-91.

¹³ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 76.

¹⁴ B.M.S. Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture, 1250-1450* (Cambridge, 2000), 57.

¹⁵ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 145-51.

¹⁶ J.B. Harley, 'Population Trends and Agricultural Developments from the Warwickshire Hundred Rolls of 1279', *EcHR*, 11 (1958), 8-18; T. John, 'Population Change in Medieval Warwickshire: Domesday Book to the hundred rolls of 1279-80', *Local Population Studies*, 59 (1997), 41-53.

¹⁷ For example: *VCH Cambridgeshire*, x, 278-81. A brief comparison formed part of the introduction to two later studies: P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240-1400* (London, 1965), 3-9; W. Hassall and J. Beauroy, *Lordship and Landscape in Norfolk, 1250-1350: The Early Records of Holkham* (Oxford, 1993), 25-7.

change.¹⁸ Domesday and the Hundred Rolls represent fixed points, but society was never static. A lack of directly comparable material between the two surveys means that a comparison can give a misleading impression of dramatic change rather than gradual development over a long period. The information is structured differently in Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, making it difficult to be sure that the same area is being compared. Though the Domesday information was originally collected hundred by hundred, it was re-arranged under the fees of tenants-in-chief on a county by county basis, so vills and hundreds have to be reconstructed by extracting entries from different fees.¹⁹ Hundredal rubrications are supplied inconsistently, so in some cases hundred boundaries can only be reconstructed using later evidence. By contrast, the hundred is the primary unit of organisation for the Hundred Rolls, and within the hundred the information is arranged first by vill, and then by manor, so any manors that cross vill or hundredal lines are described separately, and it is difficult to know if they are complete.²⁰ Terminology employed in both surveys is often vague, and some terms shifted in meaning across the two centuries under consideration.²¹ The commissioners for each survey were working within different administrative frameworks and had different frames of reference. The records were compiled at different times for different purposes, and inevitably this influenced the questions that were asked, the answers that were given, and the ways in which they were interpreted.²²

Society was much more complicated than either survey could accurately capture; the process of recording and reducing the information into a manageable format would have

¹⁸ For a synthesis of this period see: D.A. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain, 1066-1284* (London, 2003); M. Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers, 1066-1307*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2006).

¹⁹ V.H. Galbraith, 'The Making of Domesday Book', *EHR*, 57 (1942), 161-77.

²⁰ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 37-8.

²¹ F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971), 477-8; R.H. Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London, 1973), 56; P. Hyams, *Kings, Lords and Peasants in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1980), 242, 249.

²² Raban, *Second Domesday*, 3-5.

inevitably led to simplification and artificiality. Some settlements were not mentioned in Domesday, even though they are known to have been in existence. Certain of them were grouped under other manors, but others may have gone entirely unrecorded. The peasantry were recorded in simplified terms, and landholders beyond the second tenorial level were not recorded systematically.²³ The Hundred Rolls are fragmentary, and the surviving portions may not be representative. Comparison with other records has shown that they are reasonably accurate, but they are highly simplified and there are significant omissions, not all of which can be explained by their fragmentary survival.²⁴

Despite these shortcomings, the opportunity for comparison should not be missed. Neither Domesday nor the Hundred Rolls provide a comprehensive picture of the societies that they describe, but this is true of any record or survey, because the returns are inevitably static and simplified.²⁵ However, both surveys cover a wider area than other surviving documents, enabling comparison across different regions. Because they are government surveys, they are not restrained by the boundaries of lordships; seigneurial documents can give the impression that manors were self-contained units, when in fact they often overlapped and tenants could hold from more than one lord. Moreover, the best record keepers in medieval England were the large ecclesiastical lords, so a disproportionate amount of the historiography has focused on ecclesiastical estates.²⁶ Domesday and the Hundred Rolls provide the opportunity to study lay manors, as well as their ecclesiastical neighbours.

²³ See for example: R. Lennard, 'The Economic Position of the Domesday Villani', *The Economic Journal*, 56, 222 (1946), 244-64; C.P. Lewis, 'The Domesday Jurors', *HSJ*, 5 (1993), 17-44.

²⁴ See Appendix B for comparison with other surviving evidence. Also, Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 26-36.

²⁵ M.M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), 142-3; J.C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998), 22-3.

²⁶ For example: E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely: The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the tenth century to the early fourteenth century* (Cambridge, 1951); E. King, *Peterborough Abbey*,

To make the topic manageable, three hundreds have been chosen as case studies: Bunsty in Buckinghamshire; Langtree in Oxfordshire; and Blackbourn double-hundred in Suffolk.

Bunsty Hundred²⁷

Bunsty was situated in the north-east of Buckinghamshire on the border with Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. It fell within the fertile river valley of the Great Ouse, so large, nucleated, highly populated settlements would be expected. However, this region was instead characterised by small and dispersed settlements.²⁸ Much of northern Buckinghamshire was characterised by a mixed settlement pattern, containing ‘irregular villages’ with ‘straggling plans’, interspersed with small hamlets and farmsteads.²⁹ This has been explained by the amount of woodland in the region, with much of Bunsty falling within Salcey forest.³⁰

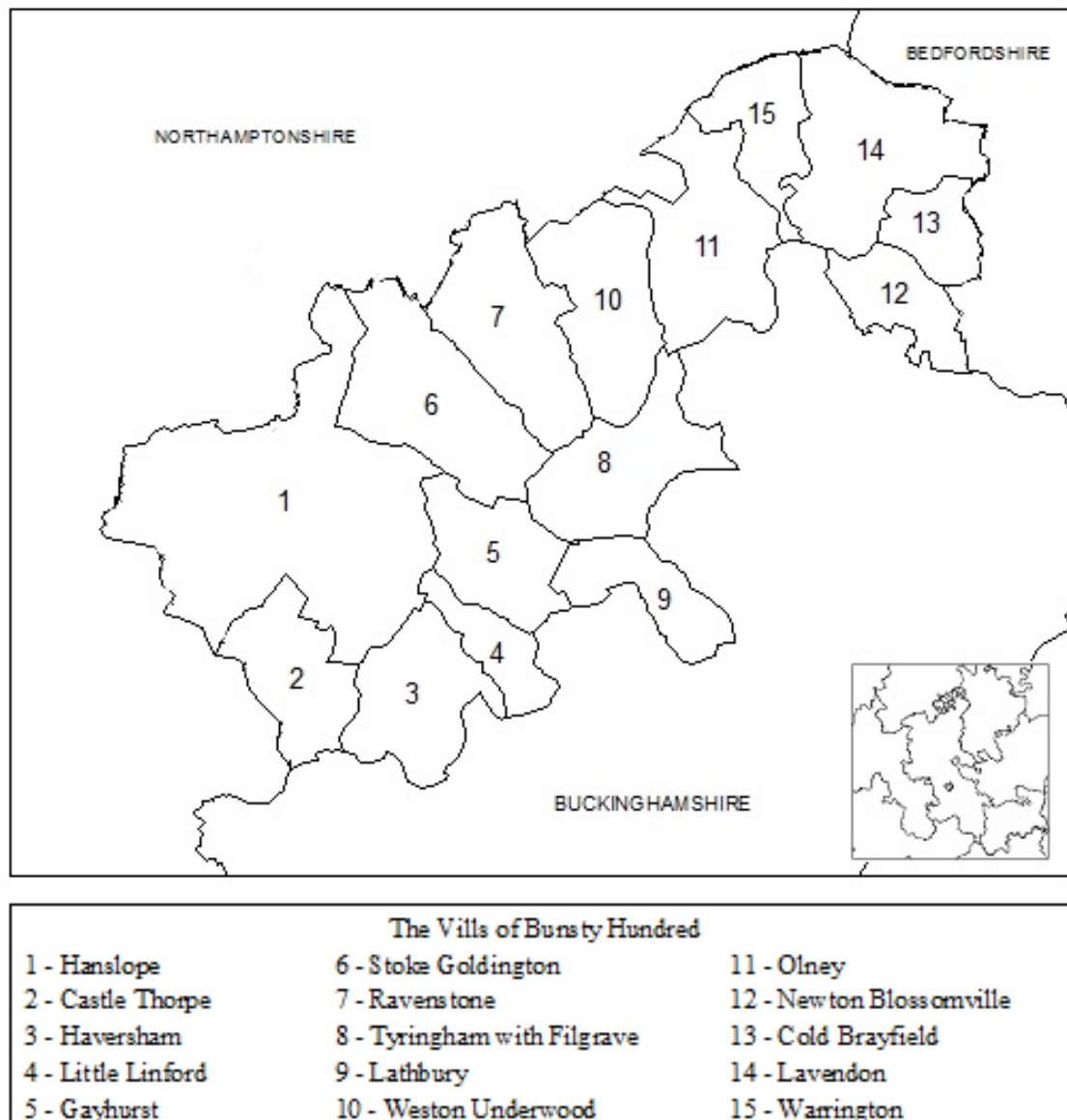
1066-1310: A Study in the Land Market (Cambridge, 1973). C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the estates of the bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980).

²⁷ VCH Buckinghamshire, iv, 268-9, 323-7, 343-62, 366-87, 392-5, 422-5, 429-45, 466-70, 482-5, 497-502.

²⁸ C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox, C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (London, 2001), 55-6.

²⁹ C. Lewis, ‘Medieval Rural Settlement in the East Midlands’, *Ruralia*, i (1996), 97.

³⁰ Lewis, Mitchell-Fox, Dyer, *Village*, 57; Lewis, ‘Medieval Rural Settlement’, 96; G. Foard, ‘Medieval Woodland, Agriculture and Industry in Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 45 (2001), 62.

Figure 1 Bunsty Hundred

The king was the lord of Bunsty hundred throughout the medieval period. In Domesday, eleven villis were described as belonging to this hundred: Gayhurst, Hanslope, Haversham, Lathbury, Lavendon, [Little] Linford, Olney, Ravenstone, Stoke [Goldington], Tyringham and Weston [Underwood]. Ten of these villis also appear in the Hundred Rolls, but the returns for Lavendon are fragmentary. Olney was a borough and therefore would have provided separate returns to the inquiry, which unfortunately do not survive. Though they were not named separately in either survey, the hamlets of Castle Thorpe, Cold Brayfield, Newton Blossomville and Warrington were also part of this hundred; in the Hundred Rolls and possibly in Domesday these settlements were

assessed with other villis in the hundred. Eighteen separate hundreds were described in the Buckinghamshire Domesday, but from the early fourteenth century at the latest these were grouped into threes and administered as larger hundreds.³¹ Bunsty was grouped with the neighbouring hundreds of Moulsoe and Seckley to form Newport hundred.

Langtree Hundred

Langtree in southern Oxfordshire fell within the Chilterns, a region typified by steep slopes, woodland and small fields.³² This part of Oxfordshire was one of the most wooded areas of the entire Chiltern region, particularly on the slopes and coombes; it did not extend in a solid block, but was instead broken up by valleys and fields.³³ The terrain did not encourage nucleated settlement. Instead isolated farmsteads and common-edge settlements scattered through the wooded countryside remained common through to a later period.³⁴ Water-supply would have been limited in much of the region, and the valleys tended to be dry, meaning that meadow land was limited.³⁵ The hundred was bounded by the River Thames to the west and south, and most of the villis stretched from their narrow boundary with the river in the west, rising through to higher ground and woodland in the east. This arrangement meant that each vill had a cross-section of local resources, from the water of the Thames to the wood pasture.³⁶

³¹ This was not a complete innovation. In the majority of fees in Domesday the last entries to appear are those for Seckley, followed by Bunsty, followed by Moulsoe; the other hundreds are also generally grouped in threes according to the later triple hundreds.

³² *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 1.

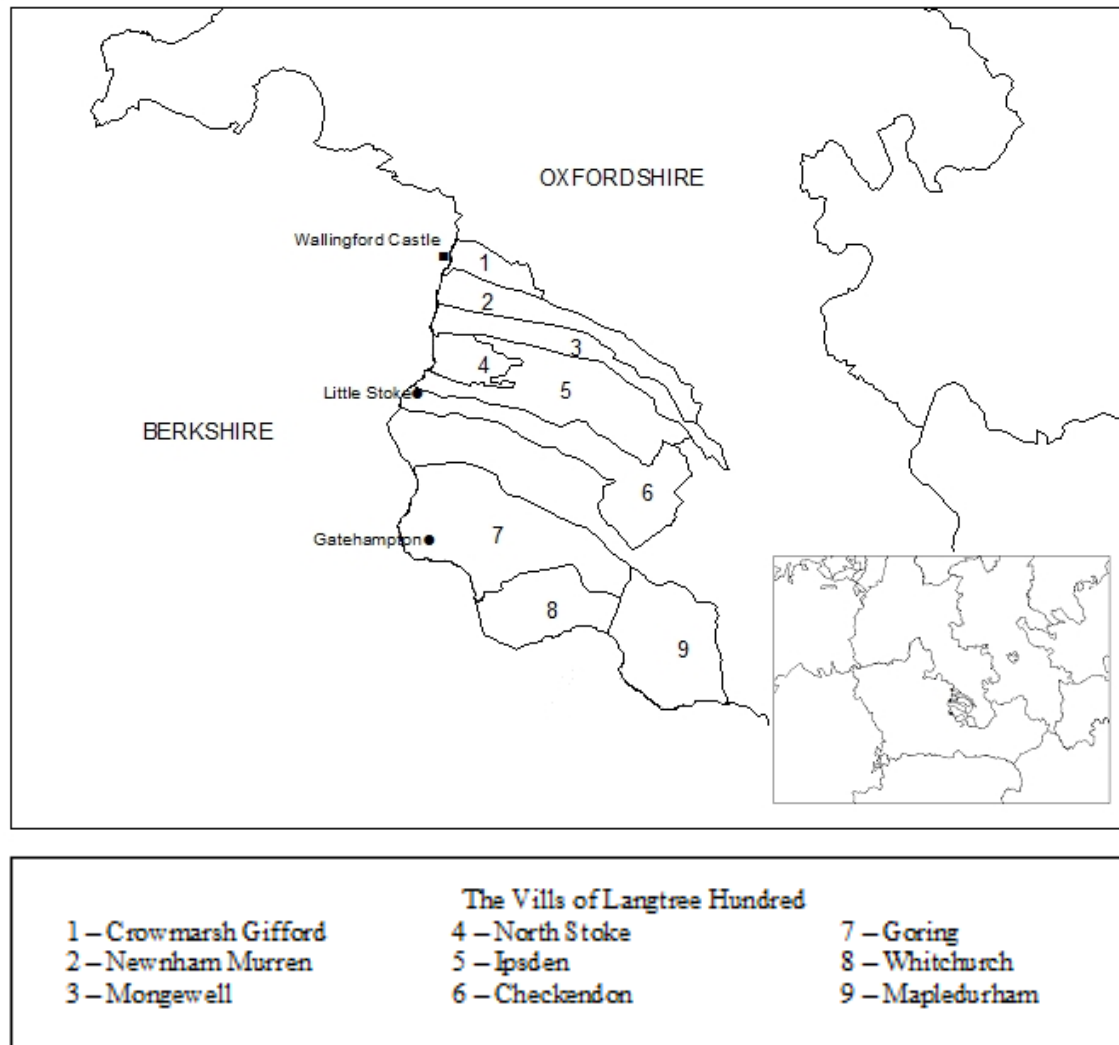
³³ D. Green, *The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns: Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Final Report* (2009), 31; L.W. Hepple and A.M. Doggett, *The Chilterns* (Chichester, 1994), 76; P.G. Preece, 'Medieval Woods in the Oxfordshire Chilterns', *Oxoniensia*, 55 (1990), 55-72; *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 7.

³⁴ Green, *Changing Landscape*, 86-7; F. Emery, *The Oxfordshire Landscape* (London, 1974), 97.

³⁵ Hepple, *The Chilterns*, 71; T. Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape in early medieval England: Time and Topography* (Woodbridge, 2013), 187, 203.

³⁶ *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 226; Hepple, *The Chilterns*, 62-3. Emery disagrees, and argues that the estates had such a long layout because of trackways along which loads of timber could be carted homewards: Emery, *Oxfordshire*, 66-7.

Figure 2 Langtree Hundred



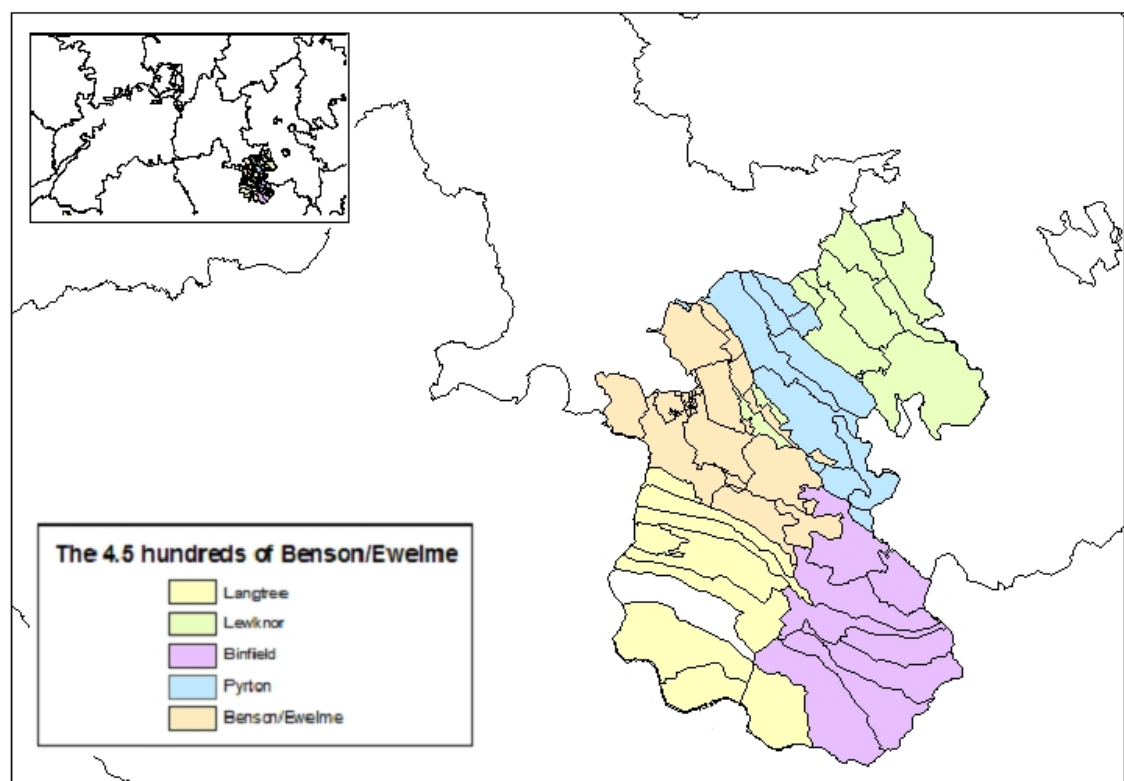
Langtree hundred was one of the four and a half Chiltern hundreds, the others being Binfield, Pyrton, Lewknor and the half hundred of Benson, later called Ewelme.³⁷ The links between these hundreds stemmed from the Anglo-Saxon period, when this entire region was associated with the royal estate at Benson. In the thirteenth century, the manor of Benson with the appurtenant Chiltern hundreds was granted to Richard of Cornwall, Henry III's brother, and from this point it descended with the lordship of the honour of Wallingford which Richard also held.³⁸ Very few hundredal rubrications appear in the Oxfordshire Domesday, but the boundaries of Langtree can be

³⁷ F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes' in *The Oxfordshire Domesday* (London, 1990), 22.

³⁸ *VCH Oxfordshire*, i, 374.

reconstructed using later evidence. This hundred contained eleven villis, all of which appear in both Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Checkendon, Crowmarsh [Gifford], Gatehampton, Goring, Ipsden, [Little] Stoke, Mapledurham [Chausy], Mongewell, Newnham [Murren], [North] Stoke and Whitchurch. The vill of South Stoke with the hamlet of Woodcote formed an enclave in Langtree hundred, as they were assessed with the hundred of Dorchester. The vill of Mapledurham was divided between two hundreds in Domesday and in later surveys. The section later known as Mapledurham Chausy was in Langtree, and the section later known as Mapledurham Gurnay was in Binfield; both were named for the families that exercised lordship in each part in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Figure 3 The four and a half Chiltern Hundreds



Blackbourn Double-Hundred

The double-hundred of Blackbourn covers a larger area than the other hundreds, and is harder to characterise. It stretched from the infertile, light, sandy Breckland region with sparser settlement, through to the more densely populated fertile lands that characterise the centre of Suffolk.³⁹ Within these two broad divisions of land-type there was much variety, with some of the least fertile Breckland soils lying alongside more fertile fen or heathland.⁴⁰ Heathland was relatively extensive, whilst woodland and meadow were both rare.⁴¹ The south-eastern ‘High Suffolk’ part of Blackbourn, like much of the rest of Suffolk, was characterised by scattered settlement. By contrast, settlements in the Breckland region of north-western Blackbourn tended towards nucleation.⁴² Dividing Blackbourn arbitrarily into two different land-types does not allow for overlap or gradation of difference, but studies have shown that people made different choices about land-use in the different regions.⁴³

³⁹ M. Bailey, *A Marginal Economy?: East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989); M. Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200-1500* (Woodbridge, 2007), 1-2, 90-115; M.R. Postgate, ‘Field systems of East Anglia’ in *Studies of the Field Systems in the British Isles*, eds. A.R.H. Baker and R.A. Butlin (Cambridge, 1973), 284-5.

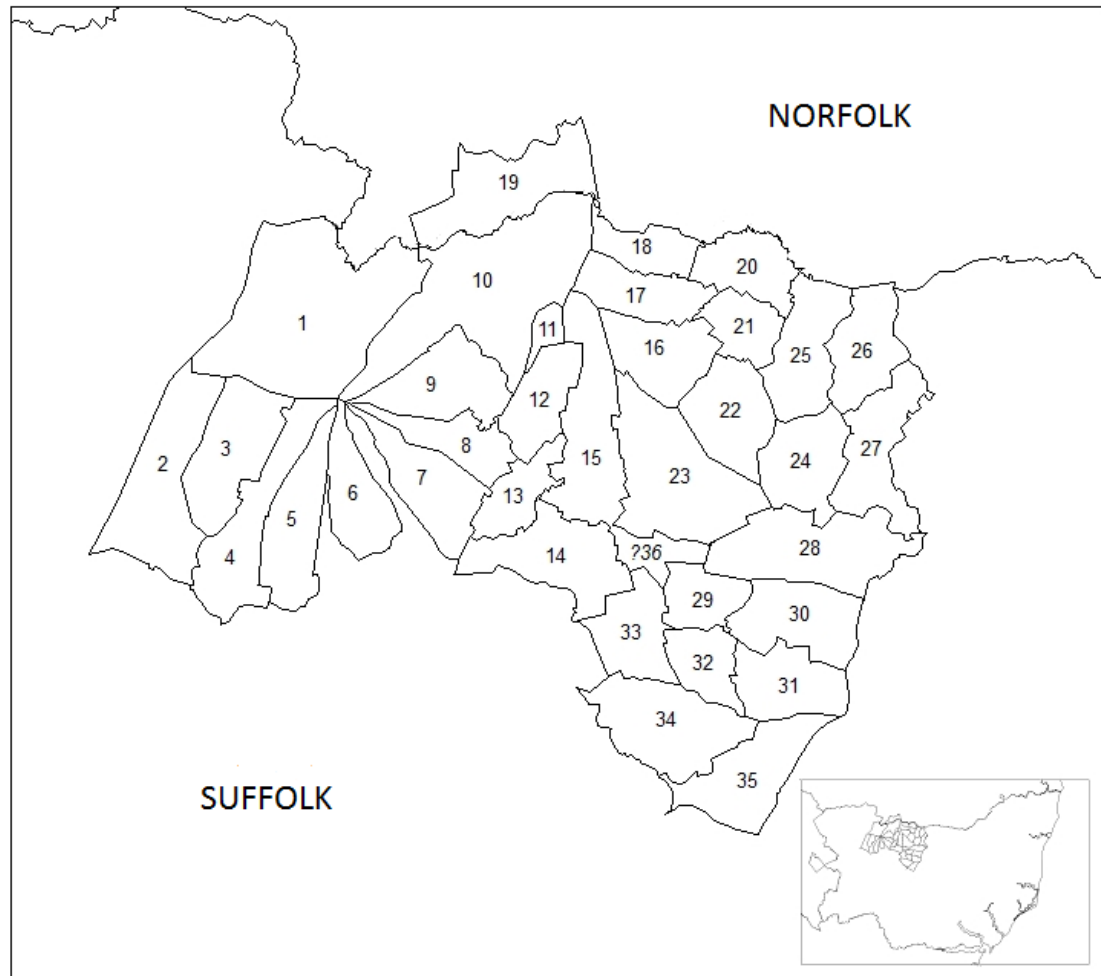
⁴⁰ Bailey, *Marginal*, 30-2.

⁴¹ Bailey, *Marginal*, 25-7, 97-8; Williamson, *Environment*, 148.

⁴² Williamson, *Environment*, 148, 190-1.

⁴³ M.M. Postan, ‘Village livestock in the thirteenth century’ in *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge, 1973), 228-30, 239-40, 245-7; *AHEW*, 607-9; Postgate, ‘Field-Systems of East Anglia’, 284-5; Bailey, *Marginal*, 118-41.

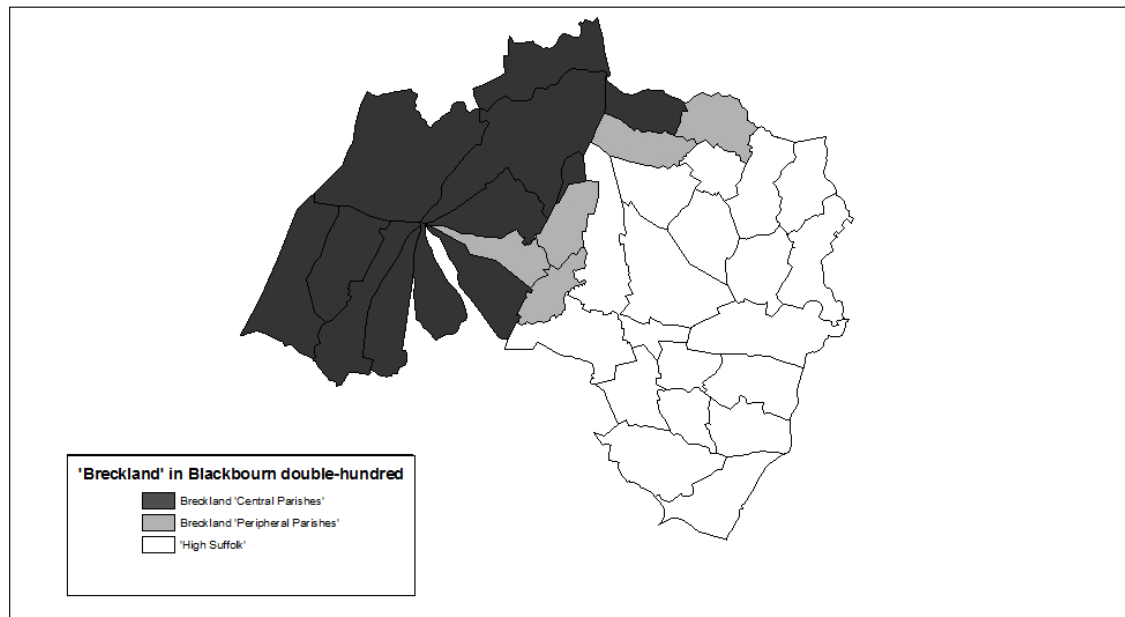
Figure 4 Blackbourn double-hundred



The vills of Blackbourn double-hundred

1 - Barnham	13 - Ixworth Thorpe	25 - Thelnetham
2 - West Stow	14 - Ixworth	26 - Hinderclay
3 - Wordwell	15 - Bardwell	27 - Rickingham Inferior
4 - Culford	16 - Barningham	28 - Walsham-le-Willows
5 - Ingham	17 - Coney Weston	29 - Langham
6 - Little Livermere	18 - Knettishall	30 - Little Ashfield
7 - Troston	19 - Rushford	31 - Great Ashfield
8 - Honington	20 - Hopton	32 - Hunston
9 - Great Fakenham	21 - Market Weston	33 - Stowlangtoft
10 - Euston	22 - Hepworth	34 - Norton
11 - Little Fakenham	23 - Stanton	35 - Elmswell
12 - Sapiston	24 - Wattisfield	36 - ?Wyken

Figure 5 Blackbourn double-hundred divided into Breckland and High Suffolk regions⁴⁴



Blackbourn was part of the liberty of Bury St Edmunds, which also included Thingoe, Thedwastry, Lackford and Risbridge hundreds, Babergh double-hundred and Cosford half-hundred. The origin of the eight and a half hundreds as an administrative unit is not clear. It has been suggested that it was as a gift to Queen Emma on her marriage, either to Æthelred in 1002 or to Cnut in 1017.⁴⁵ However, Douglas has argued that it may even have antedated the formation of the hundreds in Suffolk, and represent an ancient, small royal shire.⁴⁶ Emma was dispossessed of the liberty in 1043 by her son Edward the Confessor, who then granted it to St Edmunds 'with sake and soke' over the eight and a half hundreds.⁴⁷ The exact rights and responsibilities that accompanied this grant are not clear; they would have needed to be redefined over time to account for changes in law and governance.⁴⁸ What is clear is that this grant, coupled with the extensive

⁴⁴ Based on Bailey's categories using the Agricultural Land Classification Survey: Bailey, *Marginal*, 35-6.

⁴⁵ R.J. Eaglen, *The Abbey and Mint of Bury St Edmunds to 1279* (London, 2006), 24.

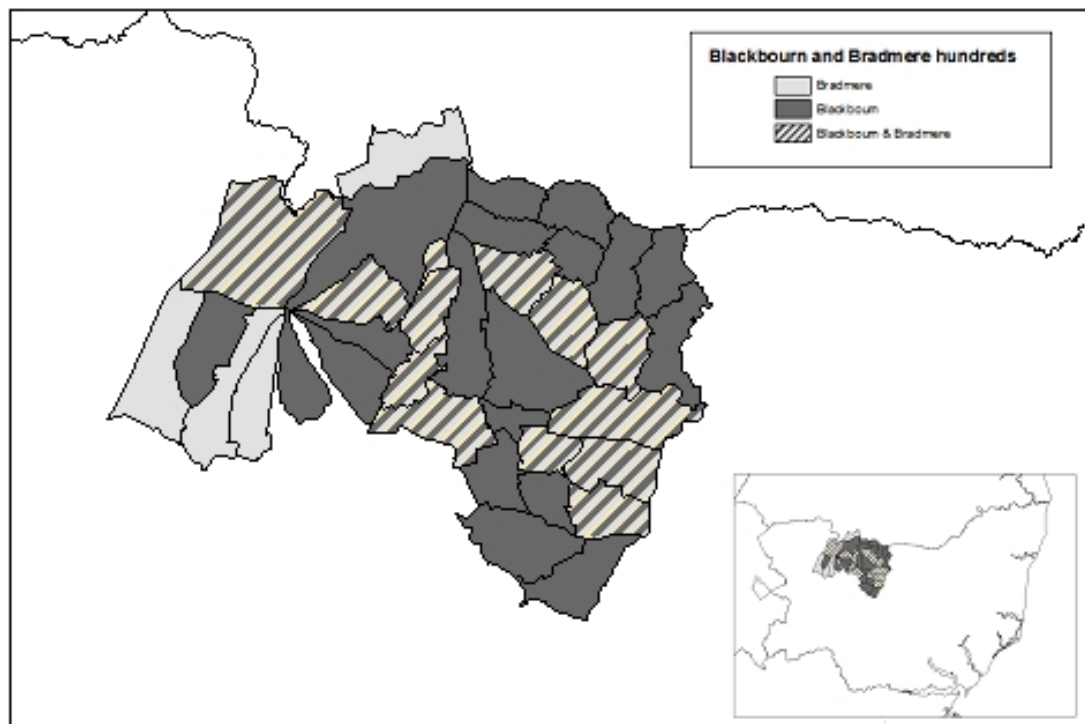
⁴⁶ *FD*, cli-clii. Cam has also emphasised the antiquity of the grouping: H.M. Cam, 'The king's government, as administered by the greater abbots of East Anglia' in *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England: collected studies in local administration and topography*, ed. H. Cam (Cambridge, 1944), 185; H.M. Cam, 'Early Groups of Hundreds' in *Liberties and Communities*, 100.

⁴⁷ Eaglen, *Abbey*; a 14th century copy of the grant survives in the Werketone Register, BL Harl. MS 638, fol. 26; for other versions see Sawyer, *AS Charters*, no. 1069, 319. Printed: *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, ed. F.E. Harmer (Stamford, 1989), no.9, 155; 117.

⁴⁸ H.M. Cam, 'The Evolution of the Mediaeval Franchise', *Speculum*, 32, 3 (July, 1957), 427-442, 434-5.

tenurial interests of St Edmunds in Blackbourn, made the abbot's lordship particularly comprehensive. Throughout, the potential impact of the abbey's dominance and Blackbourn's position within the liberty on the development of tenure and status in the hundred must be borne in mind.

Figure 6 The division between Blackbourn and Bradmere in Domesday Book



The vills that made up this double-hundred were listed under two different hundredal rubrications in Domesday: Blackbourn and Bradmere. These two hundreds were geographically intertwined, and were probably already administered together at the time of Domesday Book. It seems particularly likely that they were assessed as a double-hundred in terms of geld payments, though the separate hundredal names persisted.⁴⁹ It is unclear when the two hundreds officially merged, but they were known as Blackbourn double-hundred by the late twelfth century at the latest.⁵⁰ Since they were almost certainly administered as a unit already in the eleventh century, little distinction is drawn between Blackbourn and Bradmere below; when discussing Domesday Book

⁴⁹ Below, 273-6; Appendix C.

⁵⁰ *Kalendar*, 34-56.

these hundreds are referred to as ‘Blackbourn/Bradmere’, but sections discussing the later period use the label ‘Blackbourn double-hundred’.

Thirty-five or thirty-six villas are described as part of Blackbourn/Bradmere in Domesday Book, depending on whether the two Ashfields were already administered separately by this date. Only part of Rushford fell within Blackbourn; the majority of the vill was in Norfolk. The Domesday vill of Wyken does not appear in later surveys, and seems to have been absorbed into Bardwell and Stanton. As these hundreds are in Suffolk, they are described in Little Domesday, which provides more detail than the Exchequer text. However, unfortunately the surviving Hundred Rolls for this region are fragmentary. No original rolls for Suffolk survive, but copies of fragments of the rolls are preserved in two Bury manuscripts from the fourteenth century.⁵¹ In both manuscripts, the returns appear under the heading *de itinere Salamonis Roffensis et sociorum suorum anno regni regis Edwardi filii Henricii XIII incipiente XV*. The dating of the record to 1286 and its association with the eyre circuit of Solomon Rochester is erroneous; Powell showed conclusively that the returns should instead be dated to c.1280 and be considered part of the Hundred Roll inquiry of 1279-80.⁵²

As the returns for the Hundred Rolls just survive as later copies, it is impossible to know where the Bury scribes corrected, abbreviated or otherwise altered the record. Moreover, the copyist was selective, and, with a few exceptions, only recorded those entries which related to St Edmunds. In total, twenty-eight villas are mentioned in the

⁵¹ CUL Ee 3 60, f234-319v. Published as: *The Pinchbeck Register, relating to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. F. Hervey (Brighton, 1925), ii, 30-282. BL Harl. MS 743, 149-247v. The section for Blackbourn in this later manuscript has been published in: *A Suffolk Hundred in the year 1283*, ed. E. Powell (Cambridge, 1910), 5-65. Unless otherwise specified, references to the Blackbourn entries refer to Powell's edition.

⁵² *Suffolk Hundred*, 1-3; Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 8-9; Raban, *Second Domesday*, 161-2.

return for Blackbourn double-hundred, as opposed to thirty-five or thirty-six in Domesday and thirty-five in Abbot Samson's *Kalendar*, a late twelfth-century survey. Of these twenty-eight, several are only mentioned briefly to explain that they did not pertain to the abbey. Powell presumed that the vills which were not mentioned did not pertain to the abbey either.⁵³ Other evidence shows that this was not always the case: lists of knights' fees from the early thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries record that lands in Hepworth, Thelnetham and Wattisfield were held from the abbey, but none of these vills appear in the surviving copies of the Hundred Rolls.⁵⁴ Therefore, the fragmented copies of the rolls are not even an exhaustive record of the lands that pertained to the abbot's fee.

Because the Hundred Rolls for Blackbourn are fragmentary and preserved in a different format to the other two hundreds, sometimes direct comparisons cannot be drawn. However, despite the difficulties this presents, there are many reasons for the inclusion of Blackbourn double-hundred in this study. The regions that are best represented by the surviving Hundred Rolls cover a relatively homogenous area of England, which was not representative of the entire country.⁵⁵ By contrast, East Anglia has been considered to have many distinguishing features, including a particularly dense population, high levels of personal freedom, weak manorial structures and high economic, commercial and technological advancement.⁵⁶ Moreover, partible inheritance was common in Suffolk, unlike in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire where lands were generally

⁵³ *Suffolk Hundred*, 3.

⁵⁴ An early thirteenth-century list of the knights of St Edmunds appears in two Bury manuscripts preserved at CUL. Three men held knights' fees in Hepworth, Thelnetham and Wattisfield: CUL Add MS 6006, f34-5; Ee 360, f150-150v. A list of fees compiled for the king in 1316 records land pertaining to the abbot in Wattisfield and Hepworth; another list from 1346 records land in these two vills and Thelnetham that pertained to the abbot: *Feudal Aids*, v, 46-7, 71-3.

⁵⁵ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 37-8; Raban, *Second Domesday*, 144-77.

⁵⁶ D.C. Douglas, *The Social Structure of Medieval East Anglia* (Oxford, 1974), 3; G.C. Homans, 'The Frisians in East Anglia', *EcHR*, 10, 2 (1957), 197-8; Postgate, 'Field systems of East Anglia', 306; E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: rural society and economic change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978), 21; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 27-8.

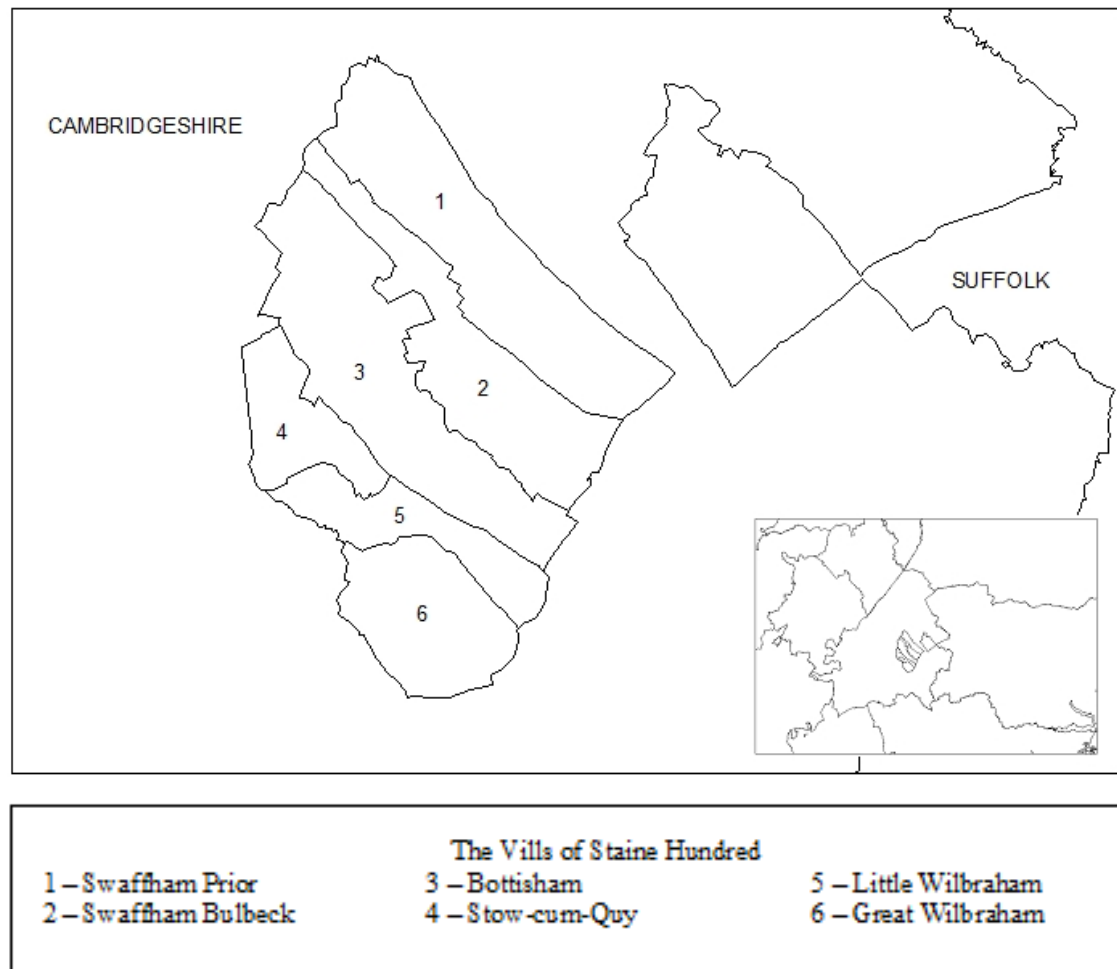
inherited impartibly. Though part of Blackbourn fell within the Breckland region of Suffolk which did not exhibit all of these characteristics, the majority of the double-hundred fell within the fertile High Suffolk region, thus providing the opportunity to compare regions where lordship, landholding and social structures have traditionally been viewed as different. Moreover, other records compiled and preserved by Bury survive from the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, with which Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls can be compared and supplemented. The late twelfth-century *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson is particularly full, and provides a point for comparison in the middle of the period covered by this thesis, which is lacking for the other two hundreds.

Staine Hundred

In addition to the three main case studies, supplementary material from Staine hundred in Cambridgeshire will be drawn upon occasionally.⁵⁷ This is partially to fill the gap left by the fragmentary Blackbourn evidence. Staine in eastern Cambridgeshire experienced extensive population increase across the two centuries after Domesday. Manors in this hundred were fragmented, small and fluid, and by the late thirteenth century the majority of the inhabitants were free smallholders. Thus, in terms of tenorial structures and personal status, Staine exhibited many of the characteristics that have been associated with Suffolk society in the Middle Ages, so the data drawn from this hundred will be useful for both supplementing and comparing with the Blackbourn data.

⁵⁷ *VCH Cambridgeshire*, x, 189-331. Some of the information for Staine hundred was gathered during research for my MA dissertation on the vill of Swaffham Prior in that hundred. The research for the rest of the hundred was gathered during the three years of PhD research.

Figure 7 Staine Hundred



Like in Langtree hundred, the vills of Staine were arranged so most had a share of resources; bounded by the River Cam, with fenlands in the north-west, the land rose gently through arable land to heathland in the south-east.⁵⁸ The fens and heaths were important resources, so despite intense pressure on land no wide-scale drainage or assarting was undertaken during the medieval period.⁵⁹ There were six vills in Staine in Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Bottisham, Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham, Stow-cum-Quy, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior. The principal settlement within each tended to be located in a slightly elevated, well-drained site, and was often

⁵⁸ *VCH Cambridgeshire*, x, 189.

⁵⁹ C. Taylor, *The Cambridgeshire Landscape* (London, 1973), 210-20; *Historical Monuments*, xxxii.

on the divide between the arable upland and either the heath or fenlands.⁶⁰ Each contained other smaller areas of settlement as well, rather than forming one large nucleated centre.

The hundred was essentially an artificial administrative unit. Thus, using hundredal boundaries to define the limits of this study is also artificial. Few studies have made use of the hundred as a unit of analysis, generally either working with larger units like counties or lordships, or the smaller manor and vill divisions.⁶¹ Others have defined the boundaries of their studies based on regions with shared physical characteristics, rather than being confined by administrative boundaries.⁶² One of the questions that this thesis will explore is whether the hundred is a useful unit of analysis, or if changes in local society could be traced more effectively by using more traditional units of analysis like the county or lordship.

There are compelling reasons for choosing to structure this analysis within hundredal boundaries, beyond the fact that they were used for the collection and organisation of the returns to the two surveys under consideration. Phillips described her comparison of two Bury manors in the same region of Suffolk as a ‘controlled experiment’, because variables brought about by differences in lordship and landscape were minimised.⁶³ This is true, but a comparison of different regions influenced in different ways by

⁶⁰ *Historical Monuments*, xxxii.

⁶¹ For example: County: J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 1994); Bailey, *Suffolk. Lordship: Miller, Ely*; Dyer, *Lords. Vill/Manor: Harvey, Cuxham*; E.B. DeWindt, *Land and People in Holywell-cum-Needingworth: Structures of tenure and patterns of social organization in an east Midlands Village, 1252-1457* (Toronto, 1972); Z. Razi, *Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish: Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen, 1270-1400* (Cambridge, 1980).

⁶² Bailey, *Marginal*; Douglas, *East Anglia*; D. Roden, ‘Inheritance Customs and Succession to Land in the Chiltern Hills in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries’, *JBS*, 7, 1 (1967), 1-11; Preece, ‘Medieval Woods’, 55-72.

⁶³ J.L., Phillips, ‘Collaboration and Litigation in two Suffolk Manor Courts, 1289-1364’, PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge (2005), 14-5.

lordship and landscape would surely also provide valuable results. The choice of three hundreds in three different regions facilitates both types of comparison: local comparison of neighbouring settlements sharing similar landscape features, some of which were held by the same lord; and comparison of settlements in different regions, faced with different opportunities and challenges in terms of their local environment. The hundred is a more manageable unit to work with than the county or other larger regions, but even so, some of the detail that could have been achieved in a study of one smaller area has been sacrificed. This has been deemed worthwhile, because of the possibilities it opens up for comparison on a broader scale.

Other Sources

In addition to the two surveys that act as book ends to this study, other surviving evidence will be drawn upon. Much of the available evidence is weighted towards the end of the period, so inevitably there is a greater focus on the thirteenth century. Surviving government records increase in quantity from the end of the twelfth century and throughout the thirteenth. For this study, taxation records and judicial records are particularly useful. The return for the 1283 lay subsidy survives for Blackbourn double-hundred; as it is so close in date to the Hundred Rolls, this return can be used to supplement the surviving fragments of the Blackbourn Hundred Rolls.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, none of the surviving taxation records for the other two hundreds are so early, but some use has been made of surviving early fourteenth-century returns for Langtree.⁶⁵

Though unfree peasants were unable to sue in the king's courts, Henry II's legal reforms provided the opportunity for even the smallest freeholders to bring a case before the

⁶⁴ TNA E179/242/41. Printed in *Suffolk Hundred*.

⁶⁵ From 1306: TNA E179/161/10, 26-26d.

king's judges. How often smallholders would have made use of this right is debateable, but theoretically records from the king's courts can provide information about a wide spectrum of society from the lowliest freeholder up to the greatest barons. The earliest eyre records survive from the late twelfth century, but the three case study hundreds only appear in rolls from the thirteenth century. In addition to the litigation recorded in the Civil Pleas, the Crown Pleas reveal important details about the role of the king's government in the localities and about relationships within local communities. Moreover, many of the eyre rolls also provide lists of the jurors that were empanelled to answer questions about their hundreds at the eyre. At least one jury panel survives for each case study hundred. The existence of the Hundred Rolls provides the only general opportunity to consider these jurors in the context of their landholdings and to explore the types of men who were called upon to serve the Crown in their localities. This hinge group in society is explored in detail in Chapter 3.

Other government records that have been drawn upon include the *Inquisitio Post Mortem* returns, compiled upon the death of a tenant-in-chief. Some provide cursory details, but occasionally a detailed extent including names of tenants and their rents and services are included, as well as a list of the jurors who were called upon to provide the information. The reliability of the *IPMs* has been questioned,⁶⁶ but they are particularly useful in this study as a check upon the information provided in the Hundred Rolls.

Seignorial records have also been drawn upon, most notably those preserved by Bury St Edmunds. Bury's records are particularly important, as they help to bridge the gap

⁶⁶ For a consideration of the accuracy and usefulness of *IPMs* see: Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 46-67; R.F. Hunnisett, 'The Reliability of Inquisitions as historical evidence' in *The Study of Medieval Records*, eds. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford, 1971), 206-35; M. Bailey, *The English Manor, c.1200-c.1500* (Manchester, 2002), 43.

between Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls. The so-called ‘Feudal Book’ is a text preserved in a late twelfth-century Bury manuscript as the second part of the ‘Black Book’ of the abbey.⁶⁷ There is also an abbreviation of the same text in the fourteenth-century *Pinchbeck Register*.⁶⁸ For Douglas, the ‘Feudal Book’ was a unified whole. It was a monastic extent drawn up shortly after the death of the Conqueror (1087), but before the death of Abbot Baldwin (c.1097-8).⁶⁹ Whilst it drew on the Domesday process and some Domesday material, it was essentially an independent survey.⁷⁰ The text as it is preserved does not have a title, though c.1300 a Bury scribe made reference to information *in libro feoffamentorum Abbatis Baldewini*.⁷¹ Gage called the document ‘The Feudal Book of Abbot Baldwin’ in his 1838 *Antiquities of Suffolk*.⁷² This was adopted by Douglas when he published the text and has been used by many subsequent scholars. However, the date and association of the survey with Baldwin has not been universally accepted, and there are reasons to believe that the three parts of the ‘Feudal Book’ may represent three independent texts, rather than the returns from one survey.⁷³ Therefore, throughout the three sections will be referred to as ‘Bury A’, ‘Bury B’ and ‘Bury C’.⁷⁴

Bury A lists the lands held by St Edmunds, including the number of carucates and the number of each category of peasant. It follows the same order as the entries in Little Domesday and the information it provides is substantially the same as that in Little Domesday Book, just heavily abbreviated; it is likely that it is an abbreviated copy of

⁶⁷ CUL MS Mm iv 19. The ‘Black Book’ appears on fos 52-146, the ‘Feudal Book’ being fos 124-46. The ‘Feudal Book’ is printed and analysed by Douglas: *FD*, 3-44.

⁶⁸ CUL MS Ee iii 60; *Pinchbeck*, i, 410-21.

⁶⁹ *FD*, xlvii-xlviii.

⁷⁰ *FD*, xlvi-xlix.

⁷¹ *Pinchbeck*, i, 272.

⁷² J. Gage, *The History and Antiquities of Suffolk: Thingoe Hundred* (London, 1838).

⁷³ Lennard, *Rural England*, 359, 359n; H.C. Darby, *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England* (Cambridge, 1971), 154; Galbraith, ‘Making of Domesday’, 168n; *Kalendar*, xxxviii.

⁷⁴ D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), 30-2, 85, 88, 245. All references refer to Douglas’ edition: *FD*, 3-15 (Bury A); 15-24 (Bury B); 25-44 (Bury C).

the Domesday returns. Bury B lists the lands held by Bury's subtenants. This extent is structured differently to Domesday making comparison difficult, but it is clear that it cannot have been copied directly from Domesday because it provides additional information. The inclusion of some subtenancies not mentioned in Domesday suggests that it may have been later than the Domesday survey, but as the same men were holding as subtenants in both surveys it was probably compiled within a few years of the Domesday inquest. By contrast, Bury C cannot have drawn upon Domesday Book at all. Bury C contains lists of tenants and their payments, vill by vill within each hundred. The returns are fragmentary and incomplete, and only thirteen Blackbourn vills are mentioned.⁷⁵ Douglas argued that these lists provide the names of the Domesday peasantry, but a lack of correlation suggests that they are probably later instead. Lennard and Davis showed that they must have been earlier than 1119;⁷⁶ though an exact date cannot be established, it seems likely that Bury C was compiled during the early twelfth century, providing the names of Bury's peasants within a generation of the Domesday survey. The dating of these three texts and their relationship with each other and with Domesday Book is explored in more detail in Appendix A.

Another extent, compiled in the late twelfth century, also describes Blackbourn. Abbot Samson's *Kalendar* is preserved in a thirteenth-century Bury manuscript.⁷⁷ Davis has shown that there are two distinct parts. The first, describing Blackbourn double-hundred and Thedwastry and Thingoe hundreds, appears complete and Davis dated it to c.1186-

⁷⁵ *FD*, 25-44.

⁷⁶ Lennard, *Rural England*, 359, 359n; *Kalendar*, xxxviii.

⁷⁷ CUL Add MS 6006. Printed in: *Kalendar*, 3-72.

8. In contrast, the sections for the half-hundred of Cosford and Babergh double-hundred appear to still be in draft form, and to have been compiled around 1190-1.⁷⁸

The section describing Blackbourn starts by listing the vills in their respective leets, followed by the number of suits of court owed by each vill. It then proceeds vill by vill providing a survey of the socage land, at its most detailed providing the names of the tenants, the size of their holdings, and how many dues they owed, including hidage, *wardpenny* (commuted payment for guard service), *averpenny* (commuted payment for carrying service), foddercorn and sheriff's aid.⁷⁹ These dues were hundredal or regalian: the revenues that came to the abbot because of his exceptional rights within the eight and a half hundreds. Information about non-socage lands, including the abbot's demesne and the villeinage, is therefore generally not included. Though the *Kalendar* is not an exhaustive description of the tenurial situation on Bury's lands in the late twelfth century, it is particularly useful because it describes the rights and dues that pertained to the abbot as holder of the liberty. Though it was compiled a century after Domesday, it may give some idea of what soke lordship entailed when it was described in that survey.

None of the other lords in the three hundreds under consideration left records as substantial as Bury, but there is some surviving material. The *Pakenham Cartulary*, compiled in the early fourteenth century, records land grants relating to the Pakenham's manor of Ixworth Thorpe in Blackbourn hundred.⁸⁰ William of Pakenham was an important Suffolk knight; he also held in the Blackbourn vills of Norton, Great Ashfield

⁷⁸ *Kalendar*, xii. Key evidence for dating includes the references to Geoffrey Peche in part 1, who inherited in 1186 and died in 1188; the second part was compiled after the death of Robert of Cockfield in 1190.

⁷⁹ *Kalendar*, 34-56.

⁸⁰ BL Campbell Ch XVII. Published as: *Pakenham*.

and Bardwell, as well as other estates elsewhere.⁸¹ The significance of this cartulary is twofold: one, it was compiled by a lay lord at a time when so few lay cartularies survive; and two, the surviving Hundred Rolls only provide information about Bury's lands in Blackbourn, but the transactions recorded in this cartulary shed light upon the estates of one of the other manorial lords in this hundred. Particular use is made of this cartulary in Chapter 3, along with other surviving collections of charters, in an attempt to reconstruct the networks of those witnessing charters and acting in the local administration.⁸²

Manorial records have been utilised in numerous studies to explore the relationships between lords and peasants and within local communities.⁸³ Some manorial surveys survive from the twelfth century, and account rolls and manor court rolls survive from the first half of the thirteenth century.⁸⁴ The proliferation of these documents has been associated with the emergence of the common law, which provided a context in which titles to land were protected and more clearly defined, and affirmed the importance of documentation and written proof. This occurred at the same time that inflation was placing greater pressure on landlords and encouraging them to exploit their lands more efficiently.⁸⁵

Though the surviving documents increase in number across the thirteenth century, they only survive in great numbers from the fourteenth century onwards, so most of the

⁸¹ *Pakenham*, 1-2.

⁸² Useful published collections include: *The Boarstall Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford, 1930); *A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley and the Neighbourhood, 1181-1546*, ed. T.R. Gambier-Parry (Oxford, 1931); *The Charters of Stanton, Suffolk, c.1215-1678*, ed. D.P. Dymond (Woodbridge, 2009).

⁸³ For a range of different studies making use of manorial court records, see: Z. Razi and R.M. Smith (eds.), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996).

⁸⁴ Bailey, *English Manor*, 18-9.

⁸⁵ Bailey, *English Manor*, 19.

manors in the three hundreds under consideration here are not represented by any surviving material for the time period of this study. The Bury manors of Rickinghall and Hinderclay in Blackbourn hundred are notable exceptions; manorial documents, including court rolls and accounts survive for both manors for part of the thirteenth century, into the fourteenth century. The surviving documents for these manors are so extensive, that no systematic study of them could be undertaken in the context of this thesis. Where relevant, examples and references have been drawn from these records, and historical studies based on these rolls have been used throughout for reference and comparison.⁸⁶ Though they only survive from the fourteenth century, reference is also made to the published court rolls of Walsham-le-Willows in the same hundred.⁸⁷ A c.1300 extent for the manor of Wykes in Bardwell, Blackbourn, is used to supplement the fragmentary Hundred Rolls in Chapter 2.⁸⁸ Reference is also made to account rolls for Isabella de Fortibus's manor in Whitchurch, Langtree hundred, which survive for five years between 1270 and 1282, and one that survives from the same period for a manor in Checkendon in the same hundred.⁸⁹

To make more use of surviving manorial records in great numbers would require moving beyond the remit and time period of this study. The primary purpose of this thesis is to compare the structure of society, as represented in two government surveys.

⁸⁶ Schofield's work has made extensive use of the court rolls for Hinderclay, including notably: P.R. Schofield, 'Dearth, Debt and the Local Land Market in a Late Thirteenth-Century Village Community', *AgHR*, 45, 1 (1997), 1-17; P.R. Schofield, 'Peasants and the Manor Court: Gossip and Litigation in a Suffolk Village at the Close of the Thirteenth Century', *P&P*, 159 (1998), 3-42; P.R. Schofield, 'The Social Economy of the Medieval Village in the Early Fourteenth Century', *EcHR*, 61 (2008), 38-63. Other studies include: Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation'; D. Stone, 'Medieval Farm Management and Technological Mentalities: Hinderclay before the Black Death', *EcHR*, 54, 4 (2001), 612-638. Smith's work has mostly drawn upon records for the nearby manor of Redgrave, but he draws comparison with Rickinghall, and explored both in his doctoral thesis: R.M. Smith, 'English Peasant Life-Cycles and Socio-Economic Networks', PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge (1974).

⁸⁷ *Walsham-le-Willows, 1303-50; Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-1399*.

⁸⁸ W. Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents from the Thirteenth Century' *Norfolk Archaeology*, 14 (1901), 1-56. Hudson indicated that the extent was in private hands, and its current location is unknown, but use can be made of Hudson's extensive appendices.

⁸⁹ Whitchurch: TNA SC6/1118/17 (1270); SC6/1118/19 (1275); SC6/1118/20 (1276); SC6/1118/21 (1279); SC6/1118/22 (1282). Checkendon: TNA SC6/957/27 (1274).

Supplementary material is important, but since the time period is already broad, it has been imperative to try to stay within the date limits set by the two surveys as much as possible. Though at times it has been necessary to draw upon some fourteenth-century material, the vast majority of the evidence considered in this thesis is dateable earlier than *c.*1300.

This thesis explores how changing structures of lordship impacted upon the lives of the peasantry, from the dramatic changes brought about by the Norman Conquest, to other more evolutionary ones across the period of this study. Other key themes that will be explored include: the affect upon the peasantry of changes in legal status and the introduction of the common law; whether these changes brought a wider sector of society into contact with the king's government through service in the localities; how population change was experienced in different regions, and whether there was a population 'crisis' by the end of the thirteenth century; how local communities functioned, and how they were defined. These questions are considered in three areas with different lordship structures and environments, to evaluate the confluence of lordship and landscape in shaping the lives of the peasantry.⁹⁰

The thesis adds to existing scholarship by bridging the gap between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, which thus far have generated specialised literatures with little comparison between the two. It provides further evidence for the degrees of dependence and variety of statuses of the medieval peasantry, and adds to debates about living standards and the proposed demographic crisis. By comparing regions with distinct landscapes and lordship features, this study provides a link between the growing literature of landscape history, and more traditional historiographical disciplines, and

⁹⁰ P.R. Schofield, *Peasant and Community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (New York, 2003), 39-51.

allows a consideration of the balance between human agency and environmental limitations in how local societies developed from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries.

There are three main sections. Chapter 1 identifies those exercising manorial lordship in each hundred at three points in time: 1066, 1086 and 1279-80. It explores whether they had local or national interests, and poses questions about the ways in which this may have impacted upon how they exercised lordship, and how their lordship was experienced. Physical reminders of lordship in the landscape are also explored, considering their function and how they affected the local peasantry, both practically and psychologically. Chapter 2 focuses on the peasantry and their tenurial, legal and economic status. It evaluates how population change impacted upon holding size and manorial structures, and the capability of the population to deal with demographic challenges, in the context of their local resources and the intrusiveness of their lords. The variety of peasant experience is emphasised, and some of the factors that contributed to that variety are reflected upon, including the antiquity of their tenure, the identity of their lord, manorial structures and environmental challenges. Whilst the first two chapters are mostly based on evidence drawn from Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, Chapter 3 moves beyond these tenurial surveys, to explore the roles and responsibilities of inhabitants in the functioning of local society. The significance of different 'communities' is explored, including the family, manor, vill, parish, hundred, honour and county; in doing so, the validity of choosing the hundred as a unit of analysis is considered. Chapter 2 shows that many peasants held very little land by the end of the thirteenth century, but Chapter 3 reveals that they were still expected to be actively involved in policing and administration. Roles in seigneurial and royal administration are discussed, including an extended study of the hundred jurors.

1 Lords and Lordship

Though most members of the aristocracy were lords, not all lords were members of the aristocracy; the men and women considered in this section cannot easily be categorised. As Clanchy has pointed out, even unfree peasants had ‘lordly power’ in their households, over their wives, children and animals.⁹¹ But rather than small-scale domestic lordship, this chapter particularly focuses upon manorial lords and the power they had over their tenants.

There were major differences in wealth, status and influence within the ranks of the lords considered in this chapter. Earls, barons and bishops were generally the most prosperous and tended to hold large, valuable manors across a wide area. Knights and members of the gentry were of the middle order; their estates were smaller, and often covered a smaller geographical range. At the lowest level, some local free men, difficult to distinguish from the peasantry, also held small manors.⁹²

The reality was less neat, as men of the highest ranks also held small manors, and could even hold as tenants from lesser lords on other manors.⁹³ Moreover, lordship was not static, and it was influenced by changes in government, economy and the structure of society over the two centuries under consideration. The Norman Conquest had dramatic and long-lasting effects, not least in making personal and tenurial lordship more intimately connected.⁹⁴ Degrees of dependency existed before the Conquest, but even those who were freest generally saw a decline in status after 1066, as free men were

⁹¹ Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, 263. See also: T.N. Bisson, ‘Medieval Lordship’, *Speculum*, 70, 4 (1995), 754.

⁹² Bailey, *Suffolk*, 10-27.

⁹³ D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000-1300* (London, 1992), 27.

⁹⁴ OHLE, 334-6; S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Experience Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 2001), 339.

added to manors and forced to pay rents to their new lords.⁹⁵ Over the next century the status of groups of the peasantry continued to decline, and this was eventually crystallised in the legal distinction between free and unfree.

Crouch has argued that the two centuries after the Norman Conquest saw a shift towards increased social stratification at all levels of society. The catalyst for this shift was the changing status of the knight. As knights began to aspire to trappings of noble status, the group became more exclusive. By the early thirteenth century, knighthood meant automatic status and was an exclusive social category, which only men with certain levels of wealth could achieve.⁹⁶ This ‘triggered a cascade effect in society, where other social groups had to define themselves against what was generally perceived to be a manifestly exclusive noble class’.⁹⁷ Saul identified the administrative reforms of Henry II’s reign, which saw those of knightly status being appointed to administrative positions that had previously been the preserve of the aristocracy, as the foundations of this knightly assertion to aristocratic rank and status.⁹⁸

Partially due to the increasing cost of knighthood and the increasing administrative workload, the number of families choosing to take up knightly status declined across the thirteenth century.⁹⁹ However, manorial fragmentation across this period enabled a greater number of lower status individuals to become manorial lords, and the possession

⁹⁵ *DBB*, 128; C.P. Lewis, ‘The Invention of the Manor in Norman England’, *ANS*, 34 (2012), 133-4; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 21-3; S. Baxter, ‘Lordship and Labour’ in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, eds. J. Crick and E. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), 104-7.

⁹⁶ D. Crouch, *The English Aristocracy 1070-1272: A Social Transformation* (New Haven, 2011), 18-20. See also: N. Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500* (London, 2011), 63-5; C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), 278-9.

⁹⁷ Crouch, *English*, xvi. See also: P. Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge, 2005), 106-8; T.N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, 2009), 7.

⁹⁸ Saul, *For Honour*, 64-5.

⁹⁹ K. Faulkner, ‘The Transformation of Knighthood in Early Thirteenth Century England’, *EHR*, 111 (1996), 1-23; Saul, *For Honour*, 60-5.

of a manor could encourage even the lowliest lord to have pretensions to markers of higher status, whether he was a dubbed knight or not. Faith has argued that the 'principal physical impact' of the Norman Conquest was the appearance of the stone castle, church and manor house in the countryside.¹⁰⁰ Over time, these physical reminders of lordship were imitated by those lower down the social scale. Along with other physical manifestations of lordship, such as parks and mills, the proliferation of such buildings represented more than just domination of the landscape, but also control over those who lived there, and served as a constant reminder of seigneurial strength.

Nonetheless, despite changes in lordship and society more generally, Bean has argued for some continuity: structures of lordship may have changed, but the concept of lordship encompassing service in return for reward was a constant.¹⁰¹ Within this broad framework, the course that lordship took would have been influenced by personal circumstances and locality, as well as more general trends. The social status, wealth and influence of a lord would inevitably have effected how lordship was exercised, and, in turn, how it was experienced. The personal presence or absence of lords, and their wider concerns could impact upon how intrusive their lordship was in a locality; equally, the presence of other lords in the area could alter balances of power.¹⁰² In terms of their relationships with the peasantry, the power of lesser lords should not be dismissed, as arguably they would have been more personally involved in the running of their estate, and more determined to exact maximum returns.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ R.J. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), 191.

¹⁰¹ J.M.W. Bean, *From Lord to Patron: Lordship in late medieval England* (Manchester, 1989), 234. See also: R. Le Jan, 'Continuity and Change in the Tenth-Century Nobility' in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. A. Duggan (Woodbridge, 2000), 53; Dyer, *Standards*, 18-20.

¹⁰² Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 174-204.

¹⁰³ D. Matthew, 'The Barons of Twelfth-Century Buckinghamshire', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 52 (2012), 109; J. Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 35-8, 49.

This chapter will identify those who held land and exercised lordship over the peasantry in 1066, 1086 and 1279-80. Though focusing on manorial lords in a local context, it is still important to consider their wider interests, but this will primarily be used as a means to speculate about their involvement in local society. Ties of tenure were crucially important, but physical representations of lordship will also be explored.

1.1 Lords and Lordship in the time of King Edward

The *TRE* landholders in each case study exhibited great variety in terms of wealth and status. Those in Bunsty ranged from Godric, a local man with just one virgate, up to substantial thegns and a countess. However, high status would not automatically have meant the most influence in the hundred, as the balance of a landholder's interests between local hundredal concerns and the wider realm would also have been important. Arguably, a local thegn with concentrated tenurial interests may have been more important in a hundredal context than greater lords.

1.1.1 Pre-Conquest landholders

The difficulties in identifying pre-Conquest landholders in Domesday are well-known. Lewis and Baxter have developed a method that facilitates identification, and where possible the landholders in these case studies will be associated with any other land they held.¹⁰⁴ Further difficulties are encountered because of the variable nature of the Domesday entries. Information was collected by commissioners who were assigned groups of counties, generally referred to as circuits. Different circuits, and even different counties within circuits, exhibit varieties in layout, terminology and detail.

¹⁰⁴ Including: bynames; rarity of the name; post-Conquest succession; distribution; pairing of names; estate size. C.P. Lewis, 'Joining the Dots: A Methodology for Identifying the English in Domesday Book' in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), 80-84; S. Baxter, 'The Death of Burgheard son of Ælfgar and its Context' in *Frankland: The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages*, eds. P. Fouracre and D. Ganz (Manchester, 2008), 266-84.

These differences may have depended upon how the commissioners interpreted their brief and the information that was available, rather than necessarily revealing genuine differences in the structure of society.¹⁰⁵ Oxfordshire is particularly deficient in terms of pre-Conquest information and the pre-Conquest landholders in Langtree are recorded intermittently.¹⁰⁶ In the other two hundreds, some landholders are unnamed, making identification impossible. This is particularly pronounced in Blackbourn/Bradmere. Although this makes comparison difficult, it also reflects a difference in the tenorial structures of this double-hundred, where a greater number of free men and sokemen had allodial holdings before the Conquest. In Blackbourn/Bradmere and Bunsty, even some of the named landholders would be better placed in the discussion of the peasantry below. By contrast, all of the named Langtree landholders held at least five hides.

Blackbourn/Bradmere

In Blackbourn/Bradmere, the abbot of St Edmunds was the most significant landholder. Abbot Baldwin's holding, which comprised seven estates assessed at twelve carucates and thirty acres in total, was worth double that held by any other landholder. Baldwin was of national importance, but his estates were centred upon the eight and a half hundreds of St Edmunds' liberty.¹⁰⁷ None of the other pre-Conquest landholders matched the abbot in terms of their holdings within the hundreds, or their position in the country as a whole.

¹⁰⁵ Darby, *Domesday England*, 3-9; Galbraith, 'Making of Domesday', 161-77; S. Baxter, 'The Making of Domesday Book and the Languages of Lordship in Conquered England' in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800-c.1250*, ed. E.M. Tyler (Turnhout, 2011), 273-5, 289-90.

¹⁰⁶ *VCH Oxfordshire*, i, 392-3.

¹⁰⁷ A. Gransden, 'Baldwin, Abbot of Bury St Edmunds, 1065-1097', *ANS*, 4 (1981), 65-76; A.F. Wareham, 'Baldwin (d. 1097), abbot of Bury St. Edmunds', *ODNB*; *VCH Suffolk*, ii, 58-9; Eaglen, *Abbey*, 39-43; T. Licence (ed.), *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 2014).

Table 1 Pre-Conquest Landholders in Blackburn/Bradmore

Pre-Conquest landholder	Vill	Hundred	Commendatory Lord	1086 TIC	Carucates	Acres	Calc. Carucates	Value 1066
Abbot Baldwin	Coney Weston	Black.	-	Abbot Baldwin	2	0	2.00	£4 0s 0d
Abbot Baldwin	Culford	Brad.	-	Abbot Baldwin	1	0	1.00	£2 13s 4d
Abbot Baldwin	Elmswell	Black.	-	Abbot Baldwin	2	0	2.00	£4 5s 8½d
Abbot Baldwin	Hinderclay	Black.	-	Abbot Baldwin	4	0	4.00	£7 7s 8½d
Abbot Baldwin	Knettishall	Black.	-	William de Parthenay	0	30	0.25	£0 5s 0d
Abbot Baldwin	Rickingham	Black.	-	Abbot Baldwin	2	0	2.00	£4 0s 0d
Abbot Baldwin	Stanton	Black.	-	Abbot Baldwin	1	0	1.00	£2 0s 0d
Abbot Baldwin total	-	-	-	-	12	30	12.25	£27 15s 9d
Alstan	Barningham	Brad.	-	Peter de Valognes	1	0	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Alstan, thegn	Gt. Fakenham	Brad.	-	Peter de Valognes	5	0	5.00	£12 7s 7½d
Alstan total	-	-	-	-	6	0	6.00	£13 7s 7½d
Aki	Ixworth	Brad.	-	Robert Blund	3	0	3.00	£4 0s 0d
Aki	Walsham	Brad.	-	Robert Blund	2	0	2.00	£2 0s 0d
Aki	Ashfield	Brad.	-	Robert Blund	3	0	3.00	£4 0s 0d
Aki	Wyken	Brad.	-	Robert Blund	1	0	1.00	£1 10s 0d
Aki total	-	-	-	-	9	0	9.00	£11 10s 0d
Eadgyth	Norton	Black.	-	King William	4	0	4.00	£6 13s 4d
Haret, freeman	Langham	Black.	Abbot Baldwin	Robert Blund	3	0	3.00	£4 0s 0d
Leofwine, thegn	Ingham	Brad.	King Edward	Roger de Poitou	1	0	1.00	£4 0s 0d
Acwulf, thegn	Thelnetham	Black.	-	Frodo, abbot's brother	2	0	2.00	£2 11s 10d
Acwulf, thegn	Ixworth Thorpe	Brad.	-	Sasselin	1	0	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Acwulf total	-	-	-	-	3	0	3.00	£3 11s 10d
Ketil, free man	Ixworth	Brad.	Esgar the staller	Robert Blund	0	200	1.67	£2 12s 4¾d
Ketil, free & thegn	Rushford	Brad.	-	Peter de Valognes	1	0	1.00	£0s 15s 0d
Ketil, free man	Ashfield	Brad.	Aki	Robert Blund	1	0	1.00	?
Ketil total	-	-	-	-	2	200	3.67	£3 7s 4¾d
Wulfwig, knight	Ingham	Brad.	Abbot Baldwin	Abbot Baldwin	4	0	4.00	£3 4s 0d
Skule, thegn	Barnham	Brad.	King Edward	Earl Hugh	2	0	2.00	£1 10s 0d
Æthelwig of Thetford	Barnham	Brad.	-	Roger Bigod	1	0	1.00	£1 10s 0d
Ælfric, free man	Wattisfield	Brad.	-	Earl Hugh	1	0	1.00	£1 5s 0d
Alsige, free man	Market Weston	Black.	-	Robert de Verly	1	0	1.00	£1 5s 0d
Ælfric, thegn	Market Weston	Black.	-	William d'Ecois	1	0	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Alan	Wyken	Brad.	-	Peter de Valognes	1	0	1.00	£0 18s 5½d
Bosten	Barnham	Brad.	-	William de Warenne	0.5	0	0.50	£0 16s 0d
Auti, free & thegn	Rushford	Brad.	-	Peter de Valognes	1	0	1.00	£0 15s 0d
Godmann, thegn	Sapiston	Brad.	-	Sasselin	0.5	0	0.50	£0 15s 0d
Osmund, freeman	Barningham	Black.	Abbot Baldwin	Hermer de Ferrers	0.5	0	0.50	£0 10s 0d
Spearhafoc, freeman	Ixworth Thorpe	Brad.	Queen Edith	Peter de Valognes	0	30	0.25	?
Total	-	-	-	-	56.5	260	58.67	£84 10s 4¾d

Alstan's estates were the second most valuable in these hundreds, but they were worth less than half the abbot's. He was a man of only local importance, and the only other Domesday holding he can be identified with is a small £1 estate at Pattesley, Norfolk, which passed to the same *TRW* successor.¹⁰⁸ Aki, holding £11 10s worth of land in Blackbourn/Bradmere, was a more substantial man. Lewis has identified him as 'Aki the Dane', the thegn of King Edward and man of Earl Harold.¹⁰⁹ He held land in nine shires totalling about 100 hides. Though his lands were widespread, Aki's Suffolk holdings were concentrated in Bradmere, meaning that he would have been of some significance in this region, particularly as most other landholders held such small estates.

The only named female pre-Conquest landholder in Blackbourn/Bradmere was Eadgyth, who held four carucates in Norton from St Edmunds on a lifetime lease. She is explicitly identified as holding seven carucates in Thurlow, Suffolk as well.¹¹⁰ Æthelwig of Thetford held just one carucate in Barnham, Bradmere, but had other lands in Norfolk. Marten has suggested that Æthelwig was a sheriff before the Conquest, and possibly for a period afterwards too.¹¹¹ He exercised lordship in Norfolk and Suffolk, with over 100 men coming under his influence in some way; but together these men held just fourteen carucates. Clearly Æthelwig was a man of local rather than national importance, whose networks were made up of smallholders. Most of the other landholders cannot be associated with other holdings elsewhere, and those that can generally held only a few more carucates. The number of unnamed men means that the extent of some landholders' holdings may have been underestimated. Nonetheless, it

¹⁰⁸ LDB 256v (Norfolk, 34,5).

¹⁰⁹ C.P. Lewis, 'Aki the Dane', (Forthcoming, *Profile of a Doomed Elite* project).

¹¹⁰ LDB 286 (Suffolk, 1,90).

¹¹¹ L. Marten, 'The Impact of Rebellion on Little Domesday', *ANS*, 27 (2005), 148.

can be said that they were generally smallholders with five carucates or fewer, and often only one or two.

Bunsty

Countess Gytha, wife of Earl Ralph (d.1057) held two estates worth £11 in Bunsty, and other lands in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire worth over £65.¹¹² Gytha was a member of the least prolific comital family: Domesday attributes less land to her than to Harold's mistress. Nonetheless, her estates at their peak may be underestimated as both she and her husband had died before 1066.¹¹³

Two men held more valuable estates than Gytha in Bunsty hundred. Healfdene, man of King Edward held the most valuable pre-Conquest estate in Bunsty: ten hides in Hanslope worth £24. Two hides and one virgate in Northamptonshire held by a Healfdene passed to the same post-Conquest successor, and it is therefore very probable that this was the same man, but it does not greatly raise his profile.¹¹⁴ Another small Buckinghamshire holding and ten hides in Berkshire may have been held by Healfdene of Hanslope, but they passed to a different successor so the association cannot be proven.¹¹⁵

¹¹² A. Williams, 'Ralph, earl of Hereford (d. 1057)', *ODNB*; A. Williams, 'The King's Nephew: the Family and Career of Ralph, Earl of Hereford' in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C.J. Holdsworth and J.L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), 327-44.

¹¹³ Gytha is not the only deceased member of a comital family whose estates were described. Baxter has suggested that these were estates which had reverted to King Edward's control and were farmed for his profit, rather than being granted to their successor in office: S. Baxter and J. Blair, 'Land Tenure and Royal Patronage in the Early English Kingdom', *ANS*, 28 (2006), 24-6; S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), 136-8.

¹¹⁴ GDB 226v (Northamptonshire, 40,1; 40,4-5).

¹¹⁵ GDB 150, 226v (Berkshire, 33,6-7); (Buckinghamshire, 23,10).

Table 2 Pre-Conquest landholders in Bunsty

Pre-Conquest holder	Vill	Commendatory Lord	1086 TIC	Hides	Virgates	Hides Calc.	Value 1066
Healfdene, housecarl	Hanslope	King Edward	Winemar the Fleming	10.00	0.00	10.0	£24 0s 0d
Burgræd	Olney	-	Bishop of Coutances	8.50	0.00	8.5	£12 0s 0d
Burgræd	Lavendon	-	Bishop of Coutances	0.75	0.33	0.8	£0 10s 0d
Burgræd, thegn	Lavendon	-	Bishop of Coutances	0.50	0.50	0.6	£0 10s 0d
Burgræd total	-	-	-	1.25	0.83	9.9	£13 0s 0d
Countess Gytha	Haversham	-	William Peverel	10.00	0.00	10.00	£7 0s 0d
Countess Gytha	Stoke Goldington	-	William Peverel	3.00	3.00	3.75	£4 0s 0d
Gytha total	-	-	-	13.00	3.00	13.75	£11 0s 0d
Sigeric	Gayhurst	Earl Leofwine	Odo of Bayeux	5.00	0.00	5.00	£8 0s 0d
Sigeric	Lathbury	Earl Leofwine	Odo of Bayeux	1.00	0.00	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Sigeric total	-	-	-	6.00	0.00	6.00	£9 0s 0d
Leofwine, thegn	Ravenstone	King Edward	Walter Giffard	5.00	0.00	5.00	£6 0s 0d
Harold, thegn	Tyringham	-	William fitzAnsculf	3.00	0.00	3.00	£3 6s 2½d
Eadgifu, [wife of Wulfweard White]	Little Linford	-	Bishop of Coutances	4.00	0.00	4.00	£3 0s 0d
Edwin son of Burgræd, thegn	Lathbury	King Edward	Bishop of Coutances	5.00	0.00	5.00	£3 0s 0d
Eadstan, thegn	Tyringham	-	William fitzAnsculf	2.00	0.00	2.00	£2 4s 1¾d
Hunmann	Lavendon	Alli	Countess Judith	2.00	1.25	2.31	£2 0s 0d
Ælfgifu, wife of Harold, thegn	Tyringham	-	William fitzAnsculf	1.50	0.00	1.50	£1 13s 1¼d
Alli, housecarl	Lavendon	King Edward	Countess Judith	2.00	1.00	2.25	£1 0s 0d
Alli, thegn	Lavendon	King Edward	Bishop of Coutances	0.50	0.08	0.52	£0 10s 0d
Alli total	-	-	-	2.50	1.08	2.77	£1 10s 0d
Leofric, thegn	Lathbury	-	Hugh de Beauchamp	2.00	0.00	2.00	£1 10s 0d
Wulfgeat, thegn	Lathbury	-	Hugh de Beauchamp	2.00	0.00	2.00	£1 10s 0d
Thorbert	Lavendon	Countess Goda	Countess Judith	1.00	0.00	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Wulfric	Lavendon	Burgræd	Bishop of Coutances	0.75	0.33	0.83	£0 10s 0d
Wulfric, man of God	Lavendon	-	Bishop of Coutances	0.50	0.50	0.63	£0 10s 0d
Wulfric (I) total	-	-	-	1.25	0.83	1.46	£1 0s 0d
Wulfric (II)	Weston Underwood	Earl Waltheof	Countess Judith	0.00	3.00	0.75	£1 0s 0d
Godwin the priest, thegn	Tyringham	-	William fitzAnsculf	0.50	0.00	0.50	£0 11s 0¾d
Ketil	Lavendon	-	Ketil	0.50	0.00	0.50	£0 10s 0d
Godric, thegn	Tyringham	Harold, thegn	William fitzAnsculf	0.00	1.00	0.25	£0 5s 6¼d
Total	-	-	-	71.00	11.00	73.75	£87 0s 0d

Burgræd thegn held lands worth £13 in Bunsty before the Conquest. A further £30 worth of land held by a Burgræd in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire passed to the same successor, the bishop of Coutances, so they can all be identified as the same man. His son Edwin also held five hides worth £3 in Bunsty, as well as a further £43

elsewhere, which also passed to the bishop.¹¹⁶ Another son, Ulf, held some land in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.¹¹⁷ Williams has argued from the distribution of Burgræd's holdings that he may have been related to Countess Gytha.¹¹⁸ Figure 8 shows the holdings of Gytha, Burgræd, Edwin, Ulf and their men. Edwin's Somerset holding is off the map, as are some lands in Nottinghamshire commended to Gytha, but otherwise they held in a geographically compact area. There is some correlation between their holdings, but not enough to prove Williams' supposition. Williams also drew inferences that are impossible to map, however. For example, Gytha held part of Stoke Goldington, Bunsty, which passed to her successor, William Peverel. Two thegns held the other part, and this passed to Geoffrey of Coutances. The lordship of these thegns is unspecified, but Williams has suggested that *if* they were commended to Burgræd, it could explain the succession of the bishop, providing a link between Gytha and Burgræd.¹¹⁹ If Gytha and Burgræd were associated, then it would have affected the dynamics in Bunsty. Together with Edwin, the lands of Burgræd and Gytha accounted for 24 percent of the total value of the hundred; including the lands of Burgræd's men, 35 percent of the value. This would have given this family, if that is what they were, a dominance in the hundred that neither Burgræd nor Gytha would have had alone.

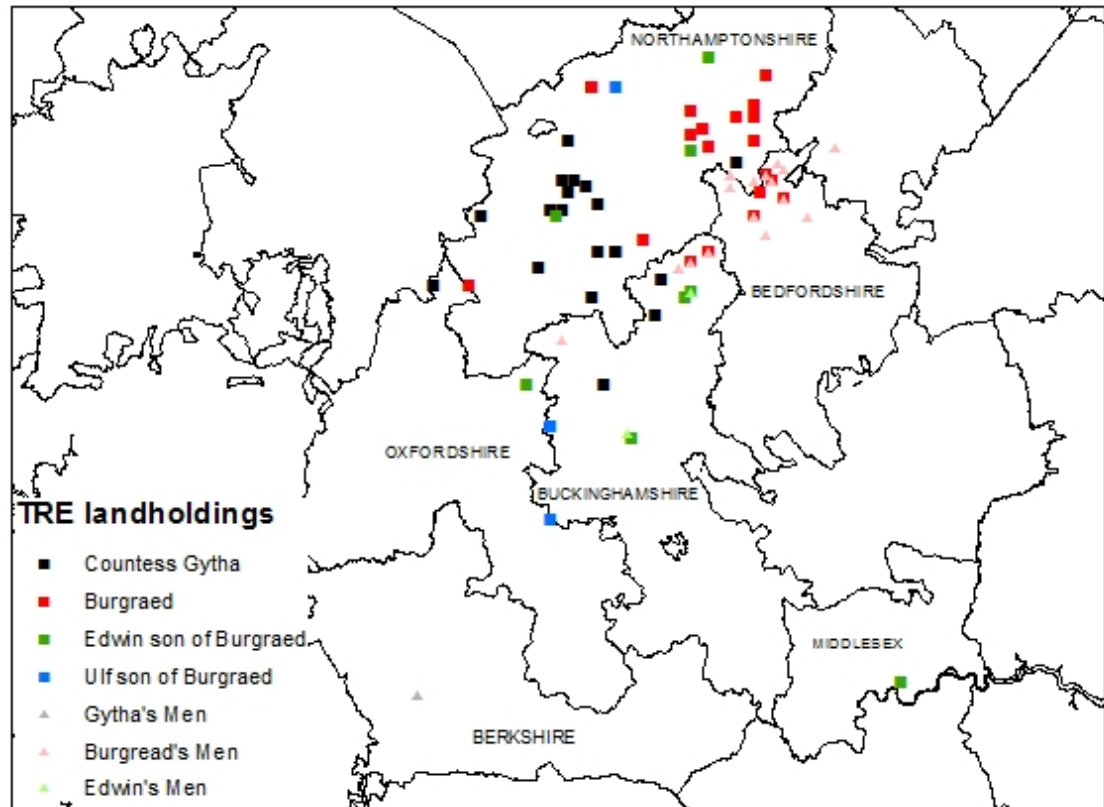
¹¹⁶ P.A. Clarke, *The English Nobility under Edward the Confessor* (Oxford, 1994), 9.

¹¹⁷ Clarke only attributed Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire, to Ulf. It seems probable that two other proximate holdings at Ickford, Buckinghamshire, and Arthingworth, Northamptonshire, belonged to the same man, as all three passed to Robert of Mortain. Clarke, *Nobility*, 271; GDB 146-146v, 223; (Buckinghamshire, 12,6; 12,29); (Northamptonshire, 18,15).

¹¹⁸ Williams, 'The King's Nephew', 336-7; Williams, 'Ralph'; Clarke, *Nobility*, 28-30; R. Abels, 'Sheriffs, Lord-Seeking and the Norman Settlement of the South-East Midlands', *ANS*, 19 (1997), 31.

¹¹⁹ For further examples, see: Williams, 'The King's Nephew', 337.

Figure 8 The pre-Conquest estates of Countess Gytha, Burgræd, Edwin and Ulf



Langtree

In Langtree, no royal, comital or important ecclesiastical landholders held before the Conquest. Wigot's two pieces of land were the most valuable. This Wigot can be identified as Wigot of Wallingford.¹²⁰ Wigot of Wallingford's lands have been associated with three different post-Conquest successors: Miles Crispin, Robert d'Oilly and Earl Roger.¹²¹ Descent to these men links Wigot with a further forty-two hides in Oxfordshire, plus lands in seven other counties.¹²² Over £114 worth of land can confidently be identified as Wigot of Wallingford's demesne estates in 1066 (Figure 9). This is probably a low estimate, because many of his lands were in Oxfordshire, a county that records very little about *TRE* landholders. If Wigot can be associated with

¹²⁰ Clarke, *Nobility*, 119, 144-5, 356-7; C.D. Tilley, 'The Honour of Wallingford, 1066-1300', PhD Thesis, King's College London (2011), 21-30; K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'The Devolution of the Honour of Wallingford, 1066-1148', *Oxoniensia*, 54 (1989), 313-4; A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), 100-2.

¹²¹ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 22-3.

¹²² See also Clarke, *Nobility*, 356-7; Tilley, 'Wallingford', 21-30.

the other lands in Oxfordshire that passed to Miles Crispin and Robert d'Oilly without specifying a pre-Conquest holder, this would add another seventy-two hides to his holdings.¹²³ At least another eighteen hides and two virgates were held by Wigot's son Toki in 1066 and other family members probably also held lands.¹²⁴ Wigot was a royal servant and a landholder of some substance, with widespread landed interests.¹²⁵

Table 3 Pre-Conquest landholders in Langtree

Pre-Conquest holder	Vill	1086 TIC	Hides	Value 1066
Wigot	Goring	Robert d'Oilly	20	£10 0s 0d
Wigot	Gatehampton	Miles Crispin	5	£4 0s 0d
Wigot total	-	-	25	£14 0s 0d
Edwin	North Stoke	Miles Crispin	10	£13 0s 0d
Engelric	Newnham Murren	Miles Crispin	10	£12 0s 0d
Wulfred	Checkendon	Alfred, nephew of Wigot	5	£4 0s 0d
Wulfred	Little Stoke	Alfred, nephew of Wigot	3	£4 0s 0d
Wulfred total	-	-	8	£8 0s 0d
Leofric	Whitchurch	Miles Crispin	5	£7 10s 0d
Alwine	Whitchurch	Miles Crispin	5	£7 10s 0d
Total	-	-	63	£62 0s 0d

Leofric and Alwine were the least substantial *TRE* landholders in Langtree, but even so, their lands at Whitchurch were together worth £15 in 1066. Both are common names, but some other evidence can help to identify Leofric. The Abingdon Chronicle claims that a monk named Leofric had land at Whitchurch unlawfully taken from him by Wigot of Wallingford.¹²⁶ It is likely that this incursion occurred after the Conquest, potentially explaining why the lands later passed to Wigot's successor Miles. This Leofric could also be identified with Leofric monk, holding ten hides at Betterton, Berkshire. This is relatively close to Whitchurch, and also passed to Miles by 1086.¹²⁷

¹²³ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 30; Williams, *English*, 101.

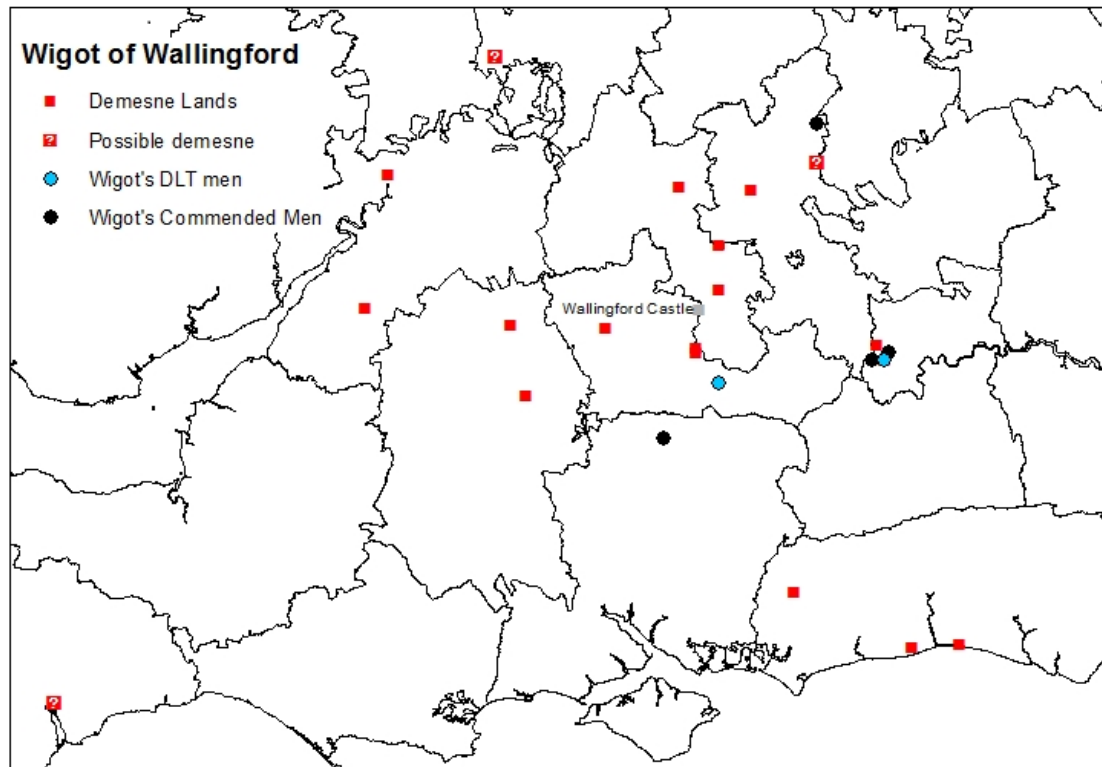
¹²⁴ GDB 71, 129, 149 (Wiltshire, 28,8); (Middlesex, 7,8); (Buckinghamshire, 19,1). For Wigot's family see: A. Williams, 'An Introduction to the Gloucestershire Domesday' in *The Gloucestershire Domesday*, (London, 1989), 39.

¹²⁵ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 19-20; Clarke, *Nobility*, 356-7.

¹²⁶ *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis*, ed. J. Hudson (Oxford, 2002-7), 212-5.

¹²⁷ GDB 61v (Berkshire, 33,5).

Figure 9 The estates of Wigot of Wallingford



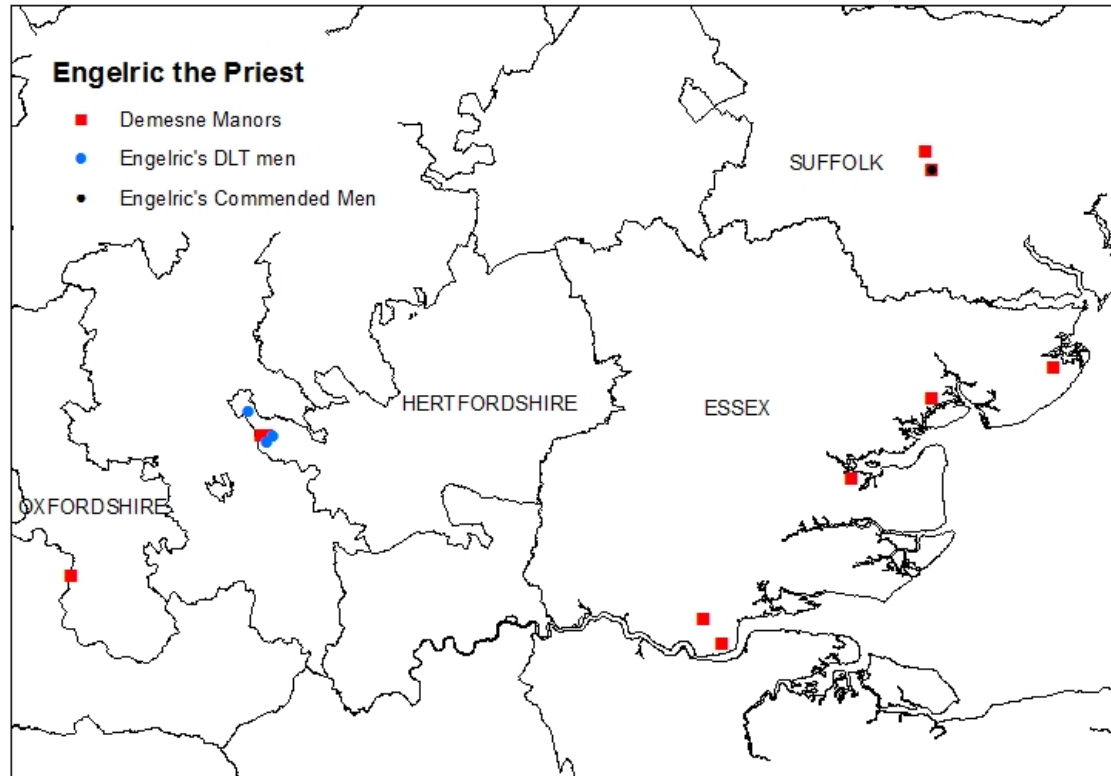
Engelric was an uncommon name. As well as the Engelric holding ten hides in Newnham Murren, an Engelric is named as pre-Conquest holder in Essex, Hertfordshire and Suffolk (Appendix D). This Engelric has been identified as the king's priest, founder of St Martin-le-Grand in London and a royal administrator.¹²⁸ The name Engelric is of continental German origin, and he was probably one of the clerks attracted to England before 1066. Through patronage or purchase he managed to accumulate substantial lands by 1066, and it is almost certain that Domesday underestimates his holdings.¹²⁹ The Langtree estate passed to Miles Crispin rather than Engelric's successor Count Eustace, but considering the rarity of the name and what is

¹²⁸ P. Taylor, 'Ingelric, Count Eustace and the Foundation of St Martin-le-Grand', *ANS*, 24 (2002), 223; S. Keynes, 'Regenbald the Chancellor (sic)', *ANS*, 10 (1988), 218-9.

¹²⁹ Taylor, 'Ingelric', 215-6, 223.

known of Engelric's wealth and career, it seems more likely than not that it was the same Engelric in Newnham.¹³⁰

Figure 10 The estates of Engelric the Priest



1.1.2 Pre-Conquest lordship

Anglo-Saxon lordship was complex and Domesday often fails to distinguish between different types of lordly relationships. The quality and detail of the information provided varies from circuit to circuit.¹³¹ These lordly relationships can be simplified into three types: lordship by dependent tenure; commendatory lordship; and soke lordship. Land held in dependent tenure was often leased for a fixed term. This form of lordship was generally represented in Domesday by stating that the individual could not

¹³⁰ Taylor, 'Ingelric', 223-4.

¹³¹ *DBB*, 80-107, 151-6, 258-92; S. Baxter, 'The representation of lordship and land tenure in Domesday Book' in *Domesday Book*, ed. E. Hallam & D. Bates (Stroud, 2001), 73-102; Baxter, *Mercia*, 204-69; S. Baxter, 'Lordship and justice in late Anglo-Saxon England' in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, eds. S. Baxter, C. Karkov, J. Nelson, D. Pelteret (Ashgate, 2009), 383-420; R. Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), 126-38; D. Roffe, 'From thegnage to barony: sake and soke, title and tenants-in-chief', *ANS*, 12 (1990), 157-76; D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), 28-48.

alienate their land or withdraw without the lord's permission. Alternatively, an individual could be commended to a lord, swearing allegiance in return for protection. This was a personal bond, not necessarily a tenurial one. If a lord had soke rights, they either profited from judicial processes, or received certain services.¹³² The three types of lordship could overlap, and an individual could be subject to one lord in all three ways or a combination of different lords.¹³³ These different types of lordship will be explored for Bunsty and Blackbourn/Bradmere, as Domesday records nothing about pre-Conquest lordship in Langtree, because Circuit IV, containing Oxfordshire, is particularly deficient in terms of *TRE* information.

Soke Lordship

Edward the Confessor's grant of the eight and a half Suffolk hundreds to St Edmunds included sake and soke. Domesday does not always mention soke lordship in Blackbourn/Bradmere, but whenever it does it confirms that it pertained to the abbot.¹³⁴ Nothing is recorded about soke lordship in Bunsty hundred.

It is unclear exactly what a grant of soke would convey, but the late twelfth-century *Kalendar* can give some idea what privileges (and responsibilities) it entailed for Bury: Bury received the rights and dues which would normally have belonged to the king.¹³⁵ These included profits of justice, hidage, foddercorn and commuted payments like *wardpenny* (for guard service) and *averpenny* (carrying service). The rights would have needed constant redefinition due to governmental development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so it is not certain that the original grant of the hundreds would

¹³² Baxter, *Mercia*, 204-36; Baxter, 'Languages of Lordship', 305-8.

¹³³ Baxter, *Mercia*, 212.

¹³⁴ For example: LDB 299, 330v (Suffolk, 4,10; 7,1).

¹³⁵ *Kalendar*, ix.

have encompassed the same rights and responsibilities.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the dues in the *Kalendar* do show signs of antiquity, so it seems likely that something similar pertained to Abbot Baldwin in the eleventh century.¹³⁷

Dependent Land Tenure

On every occasion that Domesday mentions dependent land tenure in Bunsty, it is specified that the landholder *did not* hold dependently, generally using the formula ‘they could sell’. For example in Lavendon: *Hoc manerium tenuit unus homo Alrici filij Goding et vendere potuit*.¹³⁸

In Blackbourn/Bradmere, Abbot Baldwin was the only individual to exercise tenorial lordship. Eadgyth, a free woman, 127 unnamed sokemen and two unnamed free men held dependently. Eadgyth held four carucates, plus another seven carucates elsewhere in Suffolk, whilst the other 129 individuals held just five carucates and eighty acres between them. Clearly Eadgyth was of higher status than the others. For the unnamed men, dependent tenure was indicated by stating that they could not sell without licence. For example, a free man in Little Fakenham could not sell: *nec potuit dare et vendere terram sine licentia abbatis*.¹³⁹ Eadgyth’s terms specifically stated that she held for life and that the lands would revert to St Edmunds upon her death.¹⁴⁰ Together Eadgyth and the 129 unnamed individuals held just 7 percent of the total carucage of these hundreds, so the majority of the land was not held dependently.

¹³⁶ Cam, ‘Evolution’, 427-442, 434-5; A. Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 1182-1256* (Woodbridge, 2007), 236; Cam, ‘The king’s government’, 183-4, 202-3.

¹³⁷ Below, 277.

¹³⁸ GDB 146v (Buckinghamshire, 12,35).

¹³⁹ LDB 367v (Suffolk, 14,97).

¹⁴⁰ LDB 286 (Suffolk, 1,88).

Lordship by commendation

The words *sub*, *de* and *homo de* were used to denote commendatory lordship.¹⁴¹ This form of lordship is regularly described for both hundreds in Domesday. None of the most important pre-Conquest landholders held in Bunsty, but King Edward, two earls, a countess and a bishop exercised commendatory lordship.

Table 4 Pre-Conquest commendatory lords in Bunsty

Lord	Number of Men	Number of Villis	Hides	Virgates	Calc. Hides	1066 Value
King Edward	4	4	22	1.7	22.77	£34 10s 0d
Burgræd	15	3	11	4	12.00	£11 9s 8½d
Earl Leofwine	1	2	6	0	6.00	£9 0s 0d
Ælfric son of Goding	3	2	2.5	4	3.50	£4 14s 3½d
Earl Waltheof	1	2	2	3.5	2.88	£3 15s 1¾d
Alli	1	1	2	1.25	2.31	£2 0s 0d
Bishop Wulfwig	1	1	2	1.25	2.31	£2 0s 0d
Countess Goda	1	1	1	0	1.00	£1 0s 0d
Harold, thegn	1	1	0	1	0.25	£0 5s 6¼d
Total	28	-	48.5	16.66	53.02	£68 14s 8d

Geographical and political factors influenced people's choices of lord.¹⁴² A man with little land may have felt that having a local lord on side was more important than national politics, whilst a more substantial man would have valued the influence of a more powerful magnate. Burgræd had the most commended men in Bunsty, but the majority of them were unnamed in Domesday and held little land. By contrast, King Edward's men were of more importance, such as Healfdene with ten hides worth £24. Alli, another of the local lords, was also commended to Edward, and Burgræd himself and Ælfric son of Goding were both described as Edward's men elsewhere in Domesday.¹⁴³ Earl Leofwine had just one commended man in the hundred, but he held

¹⁴¹ Baxter, 'Languages of Lordship', 305-6.

¹⁴² Abels, 'Sheriffs', 30.

¹⁴³ GDB 147, 210 (Buckinghamshire, 14,7); (Bedfordshire, 3,16).

six hides worth £9 in two vills. At the other end of the spectrum, one man with one virgate was commended to Harold, thegn; Harold himself only held five hides.¹⁴⁴

Table 5 Pre-Conquest commendatory lordship in Blackbourn/Bradmere

Lord	Hundred	Number of Men	Carucates	Acres	Calc. Carucates	Value 1066
St Edmunds	Blackbourn	390.5	46.0	339.0	48.8	£41 9s 8d
St Edmunds	Bradmere	25.5	8.0	9.5	8.1	£7 4s 4d
St Edmunds total	-	416	54.0	348.5	56.9	£48 14s 0d
King Edward	Bradmere	4	3.0	18.0	3.2	£5 13s 0d
Esgar the Staller	Bradmere	1	0.0	200.0	1.7	£2 12s 2d
Ketil	Bradmere	15	0.0	51.0	0.4	£1 17s 10d
Robert Malet's Antecessor (Eadric of Laxfield)	Blackbourn	2.5	0.0	135.0	1.1	£1 3s 0d
Alstan	Bradmere	20.5	0.0	86.0	0.7	£1 1s 0d
8 free men	Blackbourn	10	0.5	30.0	0.8	£0 15s 0d
Earl Hugh's Antecessor	Bradmere	7	0.0	12.4	0.1	£0 11s 8d
Eadgyth	Blackbourn	7	0.5	0.0	0.5	£0 6s 0d
Roger de Poitou's Antecessor (Leofwine)	Bradmere	10	0.0	40.0	0.3	£0 5s 0d
Roger Bigod's antecessor (Æthelwig of Thetford)	Bradmere	5	0.0	40.0	0.3	£0 3s 0d
Sasselin's Antecessor (Acwulf)	Bradmere	4	0.0	13.0	0.1	£0 1s 11½d
1 free man	Blackbourn	1	0.0	10.0	0.1	£0 1s 7¼d
William de Warenne's Antecessor (Toki)	Bradmere	3	0.0	4.0	0.03	£0 1s 0d
Queen Edith	Bradmere	1	0.0	30.0	0.3	?
Robert Blund's Antecessor (Aki)	Bradmere	1	1	0	1.0	?
	Blackbourn	411	47	514	51.3	£43 15s 3¼d
Total	Bradmere	97	12	503.94	16.2	£19 10s 11½d
	Blackbourn/ Bradmere	508	59	1,017.94	67.5	£63 6s 2¾d

In Blackbourn/Bradmere, the abbot was the dominant commendatory lord. Domesday identifies the lord by commendation for 493.5 men holding approximately sixty-seven carucates; 416 men holding fifty-seven carucates, were commended to the abbot. The dominance of St Edmunds exhibits none of the characteristic competition for commendation, and does not follow the pattern of people commending themselves to a lord who did not have their soke.¹⁴⁵ Baxter has shown that Abbot Baldwin was the exception to this pattern within the Suffolk material, as 92 percent of those who commended themselves to him, were also under his soke.¹⁴⁶ The fact that they were

¹⁴⁴ In Tyringham and Astwood, Buckinghamshire: GDB 148v-149 (Buckinghamshire, 17,22; 23).

¹⁴⁵ D. Roffe, 'An Introduction to the Norfolk Domesday' in *Little Domesday Book: Norfolk*, i (Alecto ed., London, 2000), 29-30.

¹⁴⁶ Baxter, 'Lordship and Justice', 412.

already linked to the abbot through soke lordship, may have encouraged these men to reinforce this association through commendation. Conversely, it may have restricted their choice, and pressured them into a commendatory link with the lord who also held their soke. No other landholders of national importance held in these hundreds, but King Edward and Queen Edith both had commended men. The rest of the lords were other local landholders like Aki the Dane, Alstan and Æthelwig of Thetford.

1.1.3 Conclusion

The status of landholders and lords in each hundred would have influenced the dynamics, as well as dictating how far they were a presence in the hundred and whether they took a personal interest in their holdings or their men. Wealth, status and the concentration of their holdings would have influenced their relationships with each other and their tenants, and the sway they had in the hundred court.¹⁴⁷

The lack of more important landholders in Bunsty means that thegns like Burgræd were of particular importance. More important individuals exercised lordship in the hundred, but none of them had a tenurial interest. In the context of his landholdings and the number of his commended men, Burgræd would have been of importance in the locality; with his son Edwin, and with the possibility that he was associated with Countess Gytha, this influence would have been even more extensive.

Much less can be said of Langtree because of deficiencies in the Domesday information. Engelric was of some importance, but most of his lands were at some distance from this hundred, so he may not have had much of a presence in the hundred. The extent of

¹⁴⁷ Abels, 'Sheriffs', 31.

Wigot's holdings in Langtree and the region more generally, make it likely that he was a force to be reckoned with.

No one in either of these hundreds enjoyed the dominance that Baldwin did in Blackburn/Bradmere. Abbot Baldwin was the only lord who had tenants holding from him dependently, and he personally held the greatest amount in demesne, presenting a striking picture of authority. As a 'survivor' of the Conquest, Baldwin would have been in a position to present a favourable description of the *TRE* situation. It is possible that he even had his own description of his fee inserted wholesale into Domesday, as there are certain distinctive features and formulae.¹⁴⁸ Still, his post-Conquest success must have had its basis in pre-Conquest rights. Even if Bury's position was exaggerated, it cannot have been entirely fabricated. The abbot was a powerful figure, both locally and nationally, both before and after the Conquest.¹⁴⁹

1.2 Lords and Lordship, 1066-1086

Baldwin was the most notable survivor of the Conquest in these hundreds, but he was not alone. Engelric survived for a period after the Conquest, initially increasing his landed interests (Appendix D), and was involved in the process whereby Englishmen bought back their land.¹⁵⁰ Wigot also survived the Conquest. Domesday records that some men in Tiscott, Hertfordshire, turned to him for protection after the Conquest.¹⁵¹ Wigot's lands were mostly held by Robert d'Oilly and Miles Crispin by 1086, but this does not mean that he fell from grace. It has been suggested that Robert received his lands through marriage to Wigot's daughter, whilst Miles initially received some lands

¹⁴⁸ Baxter, 'Lordship and Justice', 416-7; D. Bates, 'The Abbey and the Norman Conquest: An Unusual Case?' in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. T. Licence (Woodbridge, 2014), 18-19.

¹⁴⁹ Gransden, 'Baldwin', 67-8; Eaglen, *Abbey*, 196.

¹⁵⁰ LDB 360v (Suffolk, 14,39); Taylor, 'Ingelric', 228-30.

¹⁵¹ GDB, 137v (Hertfordshire, 19,1).

as a grant of office, augmented later through marriage to Wigot's granddaughter, Robert d'Oilly's daughter.¹⁵² Wigot was probably dead by 1086, and his son Toki had died bringing the Conqueror a new horse at the siege of Gerberoi in 1079,¹⁵³ so descent of the lands to Robert and Miles need not necessarily be the result of dispossession.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Wigot's nephew Alfred, a landholder in Langtree in 1086, may have hoped for richer reward out of his uncle's extensive estates.¹⁵⁵

As a surviving Englishman, Alfred was fortunate to hold lands in chief in 1086; he also held lands as a subtenant of Miles Crispin and Earl Roger.¹⁵⁶ Ketil, with half a hide in Bunsty hundred *TRE*, retained these lands in 1086. None of the other named pre-Conquest landholders were so fortunate. The Eadgifu holding four hides in Little Linford from the bishop of Coutances had held the same lands before the Conquest. She was the wife of Wulfweard White,¹⁵⁷ who had been a beneficiary of Queen Emma's will. His *TRE* estates spread across at least eleven counties, and Eadgifu herself held lands worth £46 in Buckinghamshire *TRE*.¹⁵⁸ By 1086, Wulfweard had either died or been dispossessed, and Eadgifu had been reduced from a landholder of some importance in Buckinghamshire to being a subtenant on the least valuable of her former estates. One can imagine that Eadgifu would harbour resentment for the sharp reduction

¹⁵² Keats-Rohan, 'Devolution', 313-4; Tilley, 'Wallingford', 41-53; J. Blair, 'D'Oilly, Robert (d.c.1092)', *ODNB*.

¹⁵³ *ASC D*, s.a. 1079.

¹⁵⁴ Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, 174.

¹⁵⁵ Williams, 'Gloucestershire Domesday', 39; Williams, *English*, 100.

¹⁵⁶ GDB 61v, 159v, 129 (Berkshire, 33,8); (Oxfordshire, 35,26; 31); (Middlesex, 7,4). Williams, *English*, 100-2.

¹⁵⁷ *VCH Buckinghamshire*, i, 216-7; A. Williams, 'Wulfweard White, (d.1072x1086)', *ODNB*; Williams, *English*, 99-100. Two Buckinghamshire entries apply the byname 'wife of Wulfweard'. Four other Buckinghamshire entries name an Eadgifu as pre-Conquest holder. All six passed to either Walter Giffard or Geoffrey of Coutances. GDB 145, 147 (Buckinghamshire, 5,1-2; 5,7-8; 14,13-14).

¹⁵⁸ GDB 43v (Hampshire, 10,1); S1476; *VCH Buckinghamshire*, i, 216-7; Williams, 'Wulfweard White'; Clarke, *Nobility*, 37.

in status that she had endured since the Conquest, but, perhaps, some relief that she had retained anything at all.¹⁵⁹

The Stanheard holding from Roger Bigod in Norfolk and Suffolk has been identified as Æthelwig of Thetford's son, and he held many of his father's lands, including Barnham in Bradmere, as a subtenant in 1086.¹⁶⁰ Thomas has estimated that there were between 800 and 1,300 English subtenants in 1086, a surprisingly high number; however, these men and women generally held small amounts of land, and the few survivors in these case studies conform to this pattern.¹⁶¹ In each of these cases, except for Alfred and Ketil, these survivors were holding in reduced circumstances as tenants of new Norman lords.

1.2.1 A 'tenurial revolution'?

The change in personnel in these hundreds was clearly dramatic. But did this represent a change in structures of landholding too? Sawyer has argued that Domesday's lack of detail regarding pre-Conquest lordships means that 'the scale of the revolution has been exaggerated'.¹⁶² He contended that many 1066 holders were the men of unnamed lords, and these lordships formed the basis for post-Conquest feudal honours. Where a tenant-in-chief appears to hold lands from several different predecessors, these predecessors had a common lord who was omitted from Domesday. Roffe has also argued for continuity, stating that tenants-in-chief often received their lands from a single lord who had possessed rights of sake and soke.¹⁶³ Conversely, Fleming has claimed that transfers

¹⁵⁹ *VCH Buckinghamshire*, i, 217.

¹⁶⁰ Marten, 'Impact of Rebellion', 148.

¹⁶¹ H.M. Thomas, 'The Significance and Fate of the Native English landholders of 1086', *EHR*, 118, 476 (2003), 306-17; see also J.C. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), xxv-xxvi.

¹⁶² P. Sawyer, '1066-1086: A Tenurial Revolution?' in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. P. Sawyer (1985), 72.

¹⁶³ Roffe, 'From Thegnage to Barony'; Roffe, *Domesday*, 28-46.

were less orderly, often descending into the ‘scramble for land’ that Stenton felt never took place.¹⁶⁴ Green has argued for more continuity than Fleming allows. Though territorial grants sometimes cut across antecessorial ones, land-transfers were generally controlled, and the key pre-Conquest bond in determining transfers was *soke*.¹⁶⁵

Fleming used diagrams to illustrate the reallocation of lands from *TRE* landholders and their commendatory lords to post-Conquest tenants-in-chief, to show that there was not a smooth transfer.¹⁶⁶ This approach has been adopted to analyse the three hundreds in question here. Due to the lack of pre-Conquest information for Langtree, the diagram takes into account transfers across the four and a half Chiltern hundreds, and only *TRE* landholders, not commendatory lords, can be considered.

The diagrams show that none of the hundreds experienced an entirely simple transfer of lands after the Conquest. Most tenants-in-chief in Blackbourn/Bradmere (Figure 13) received their lands from just one named pre-Conquest landholder, but this is misleading since the diagram excludes numerous unnamed landholders whose estates were also acquired by these tenants-in-chief. In the four and a half Chiltern hundreds (Figure 15) Miles Crispin appears particularly predatory, accumulating estates from twelve different landholders.¹⁶⁷ However, Miles’s fee provides more information about pre-Conquest landholders than the others, so they too may have received their lands from such diverse sources. Since the relevant folios of Domesday fail to provide information about pre-Conquest lordship, it remains theoretically possible, as Sawyer

¹⁶⁴ Fleming, *Kings*, 111-3; Stenton, *ASE*, 626.

¹⁶⁵ J.A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), 48-9, 53, 77.

¹⁶⁶ Fleming, *Kings*, 116-7, 119.

¹⁶⁷ Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, 174.

argued, that most or all of Miles's lands had been associated with the same lord before the Conquest; but the point cannot be proven either way.

Figure 11 The transfer of property in Bunsty: pre-Conquest landholder to TIC

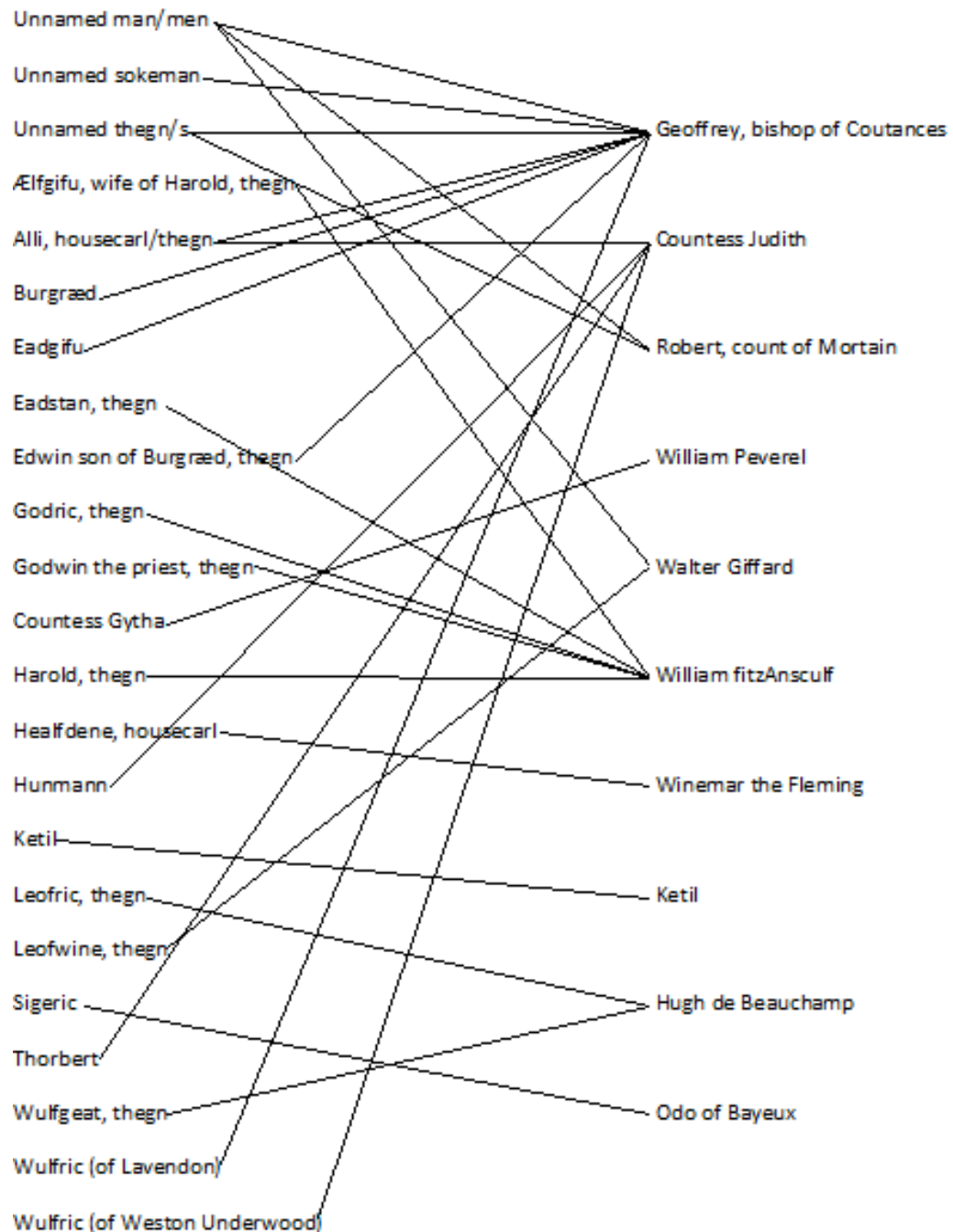


Figure 12 The transfer of property in Bunsty: pre-Conquest commendatory lord to TIC



Figure 13 The transfer of property in Blackburn/Bradmere: pre-Conquest landholder to TIC

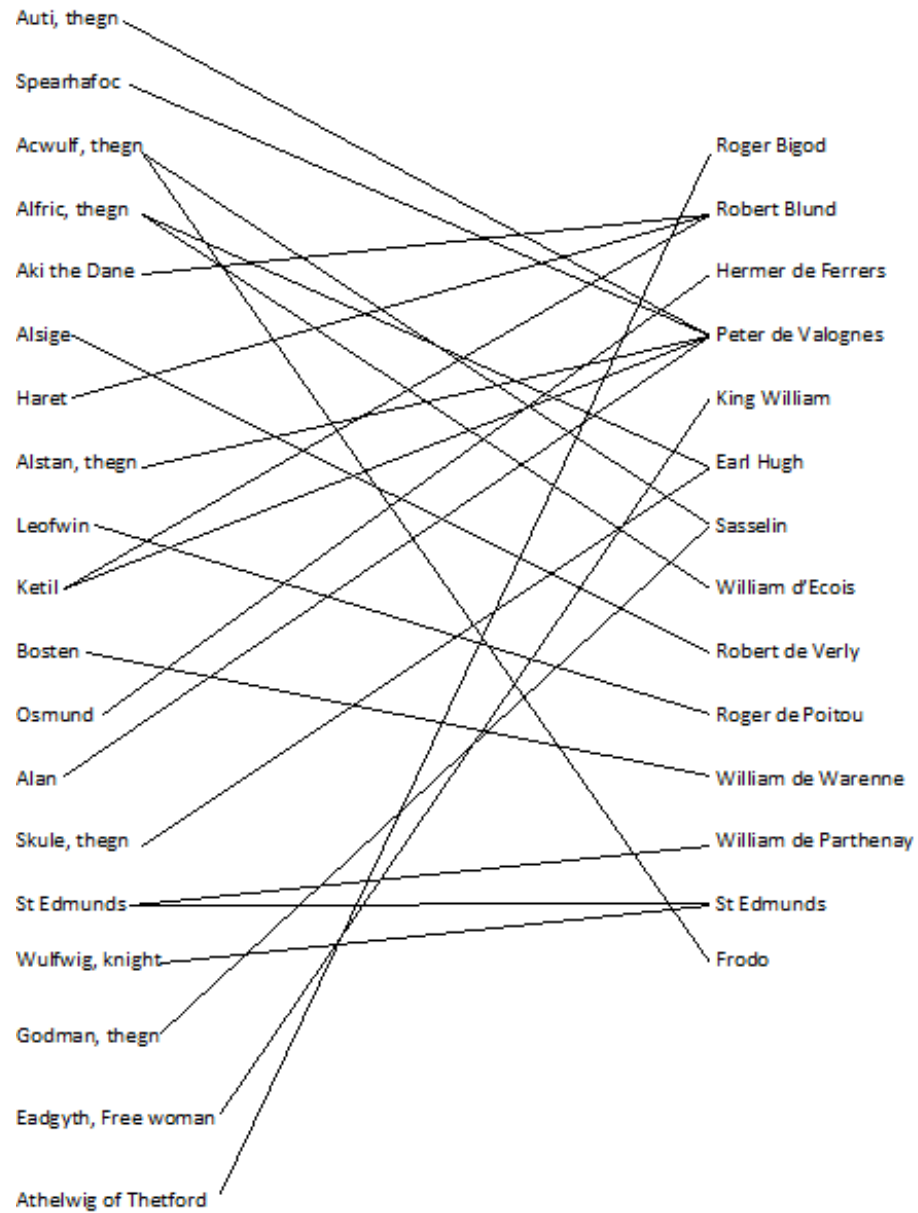
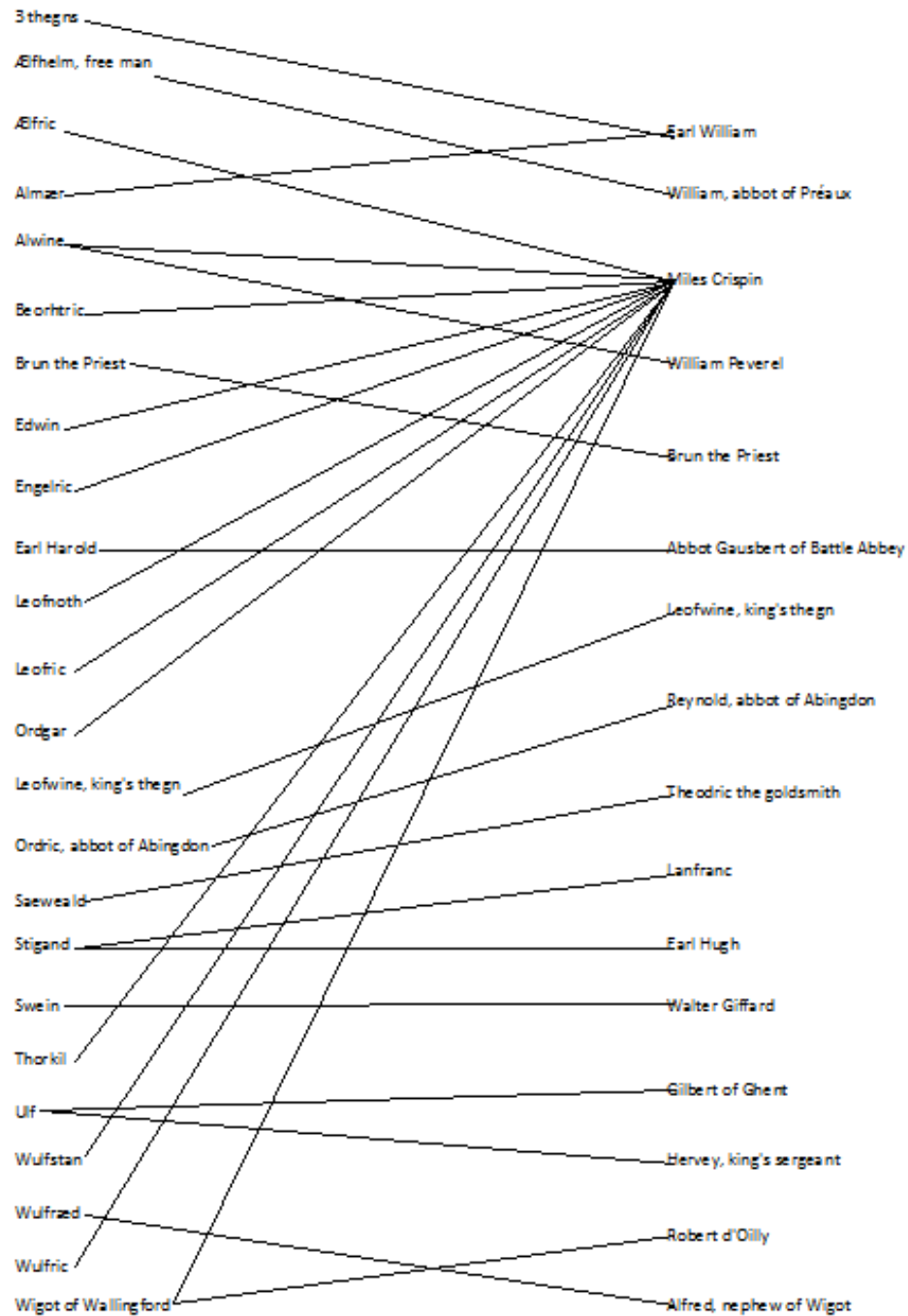


Figure 14 The transfer of property in Blackburn/Bradmere: pre-Conquest commendatory lord to TIC



Figure 15 The transfer of property in the four and a half Chiltern hundreds



In Bunsty (Figure 11), William fitzAnsculf received his lands in Tyringham from five different landholders:

In Tyringham, Acard holds from William [fitzAnsculf] seven hides and one virgate and the fourth part of one virgate as one manor...Five thegns held this manor. One of them, Harold, held three hides as one manor; and Godwin the priest, half a hide; Eadstan, two hides as one manor; Godric the man of Harold, one virgate; Ælfgifu the wife of Harold, one and a half hides as one manor. All of them could sell to whoever they wished.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ GDB 148v-149 (Buckinghamshire, 17,22).

Godric and Ælfgifu were respectively the ‘man of’ and ‘wife of’ Harold, and this was probably the Harold also mentioned in this entry, but there is no clear link with Eadstan and Godwin. Acard’s tenure of this land *pro uno manerio* was made possible by the dispossession of five thegns, and the amalgamation of three manors into one.

Some of the diagrams that depict the transfer of pre-Conquest commendatory lordships to post-Conquest tenants-in-chief do appear simpler (for example Bunsty, Figure 12), but they are still not neat, and many tenants-in-chief received lands that had been commended to more than one lord *TRE*. The lands held by Countess Judith in 1086 had been commended to four different people before the Conquest, yet she did not even receive all of the lands of her husband Earl Waltheof’s commended men.

Soke is only mentioned in Blackbourn/Bradmere. Domesday states that St Edmunds had the soke of the whole of Blackbourn/Bradmere, yet this did not transform into a tenurial interest by 1086. In Thelnetham, Robert Malet’s antecessor had only half the commendation of a free man, whilst St Edmunds had the other half and the soke, but it still passed to Robert.¹⁶⁹ In Blackbourn/Bradmere, most of the land that had been held dependently *TRE* was held by Baldwin in 1086, except Eadgyth’s four carucates, which had passed to King William.¹⁷⁰ Thus, in Bunsty and Blackbourn/Bradmere, shared commendatory lordship did not guarantee the same post-Conquest successor; where they are mentioned in Blackbourn/Bradmere, soke and dependent tenure did not indicate definite succession either.

¹⁶⁹ LDB 327v-328, (Suffolk, 6,301-302).

¹⁷⁰ LDB 286 (Suffolk, 1,88).

The foregoing analysis strongly suggests that the processes by which land changed hands between 1066 and 1086 were far from straightforward in the hundreds in question: discontinuity is far more evident than continuity. There are some clear examples of antecessorial transfers. The bishop of Coutances received all of Burgræd's lands in Bunsty, as he did elsewhere; he also received the lands of his commended men. But rather than representing a smooth transfer of a single lordship, this process also involved change. Commendation was a personal bond, but post-Conquest antecessorial grants transformed it into a tenurial one.

1.2.2 Post-Conquest lords

The grant of land to a post-Conquest tenant-in-chief would have been contingent on their status and position on the continent, and on the service they had provided during and after the Conquest, amongst other factors. In his study of East Anglia, Wareham argued that when the post-Conquest successor occupied a similar position in the regime to his pre-Conquest antecessor, they pursued similar 'strategies of lordship'.¹⁷¹ If they had a similar social background, they were likely to maintain comparable networks of association and exploit their lands in a similar way.¹⁷² Therefore, it is important to consider *who* was holding the land in 1086 and how that was likely to change dynamics of power. It must be borne in mind that many of the new lords maintained substantial holdings on the continent that would inevitably have occupied much of their time.

Except in areas of military need, William's followers tended to be granted scattered lands, and it was rare for any individual to have pronounced dominance in a shire.¹⁷³ Nonetheless, William's family and closest associates were well-rewarded, and there was

¹⁷¹ A.F. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), 99-102.

¹⁷² Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, 103-4.

¹⁷³ Fleming, *Kings*, 221-5.

still a great concentration of landed wealth in the hands of relatively few men. Hollister showed that over a third of the lands granted to lay men were held by just ten individuals, each of whom had lands worth £750 or more.¹⁷⁴

Bunsty

Odo of Bayeux and Count Robert of Mortain, the Conqueror's half-brothers, both held in Bunsty.¹⁷⁵ They were two of the richest of Hollister's top ten magnates. Robert held extensive lands stretching from England to Maine. There is little evidence for his presence in England after the early conquest period, so he was an absentee landlord as far as his English tenants were concerned.¹⁷⁶ By contrast, Odo spent a great deal of time in England after the Conquest, and acted as regent in William's absence.¹⁷⁷

Table 6 1086 tenants-in-chief in Bunsty

1086 TIC	No of villis	Hides	Virgates	Calc. Hides	1066 value	1086 value
Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances	7	37.25	7.59	39.15	£37 0s 0d	£33 0s 0d
Winemar the Fleming	1	10.00	0.00	10.00	£24 0s 0d	£24 0s 0d
William Peverel	2	13.00	3.00	13.75	£11 0s 0d	£10 0s 0d
Walter Giffard	2	7.00	1.25	7.31	£8 0s 0d	£6 5s 0d
William fitzAnsculf	1	7.00	1.00	7.25	£8 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Odo of Bayeux	2	6.00	0.00	6.00	£9 0s 0d	£5 10s 0d
Hugh de Beauchamp	1	4.00	0.00	4.00	£3 0s 0d	£4 0s 0d
Countess Judith	2	5.00	5.25	6.31	£5 0s 0d	£3 10s 0d
Robert, count of Mortain	2	2.50	4.66	3.67	£5 0s 0d	£3 0s 0d
Ketil	1	0.50	0.00	0.50	£0 10s 0d	£0 7s 0d
Total	-	92.25	22.75	97.93	£110 10s 0d	£95 12s 0d

¹⁷⁴ C.W. Hollister, 'The Magnates and "Curiales" of Early Norman England', *Viator*, 8, 1 (1977), 63-5.

¹⁷⁵ Odo: *OV*, ii, 264-7; D. Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097)', *Speculum*, 50, 1 (1975), 1-20; D. Bates, 'Odo, earl of Kent, (d. 1097)', *ODNB*; D. Spear (ed.), *The Personnel of Norman Cathedrals during the Ducal Period, 911-1204*, (London, 2006), 32; R. Allen, 'The Norman Episcopate, 989-1110', PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow (2009), 120-60; D. Gerrard, 'The Military Activities of bishops, abbots and other clergy in England, c.900-1200', PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow (2011), 36-41. Robert: B. Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', *ANS*, 13 (1990), 119-144; B. Golding, 'Robert, count of Mortain (d.1095)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁶ Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', 124, 144.

¹⁷⁷ Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', 145-6.

Both of these men held small amounts in Bunsty, and neither of them retained any land in the hundred in demesne. Instead, the most significant tenant-in-chief was another of the top ten magnates identified by Hollister: Geoffrey of Mowbray, bishop of Coutances.¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey was the uncle of Robert of Mowbray, earl of Northumberland, and one of only two bishops (the other being Odo) to accompany the conquering party in 1066.¹⁷⁹ Though he did return to the continent occasionally, Geoffrey spent much of William's reign in England.¹⁸⁰ He held 35 percent of the landed wealth in Bunsty in 1086, with estates in seven of the eleven villages; none of the other tenants-in-chief held in more than two. Significantly, 32 percent of the land that Geoffrey retained in demesne was in Buckinghamshire, and half of this was in the Newport hundreds, suggesting that he had a particular interest in the region.

Table 7 shows how much land the tenants-in-chief kept in hand in Bunsty, as well as the value of their wider holdings. Some of the most prominent tenants-in-chief nationally would have had limited influence in Bunsty because they did not keep their lands in that hundred in demesne. Countess Judith, Walter Giffard, William fitzAnsculf and Hugh de Beauchamp were all important landholders, with lands across the country ranging in value from £664 to £195, but none retained their Bunsty lands in demesne.¹⁸¹ Therefore, though he was a smaller landholder, Winemar was probably more important in a local context than any of the other tenants-in-chief except for Geoffrey.¹⁸² Not only was his one estate at Hanslope more valuable than any of the others' lands, but it was by far his most valuable estate and he kept it in hand.

¹⁷⁸ *OV*, ii 266-7; J.H. Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-93', *EHR*, 59 (1944), 129-161; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', 176-203.

¹⁷⁹ *OV*, ii, 172-3; Spear, *Personnel*, 90-1; Gerrard, 'Military Activities', 36-41.

¹⁸⁰ Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray', 143-5; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', 190-1.

¹⁸¹ Calculated using S. Baxter, 'Unpublished Analysis of the Structure of Landed Society in 1086 Based on John Palmer's Domesday Explorer Database', (2014). Also see: Green, *Aristocracy*, 36-9, 45.

¹⁸² J. Verberckmoes, 'Flemish Tenants-in-Chief in Domesday England', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 66 (1988), 729, 736.

Figure 16 The Buckinghamshire estates of Geoffrey de Mowbray, bishop of Coutances

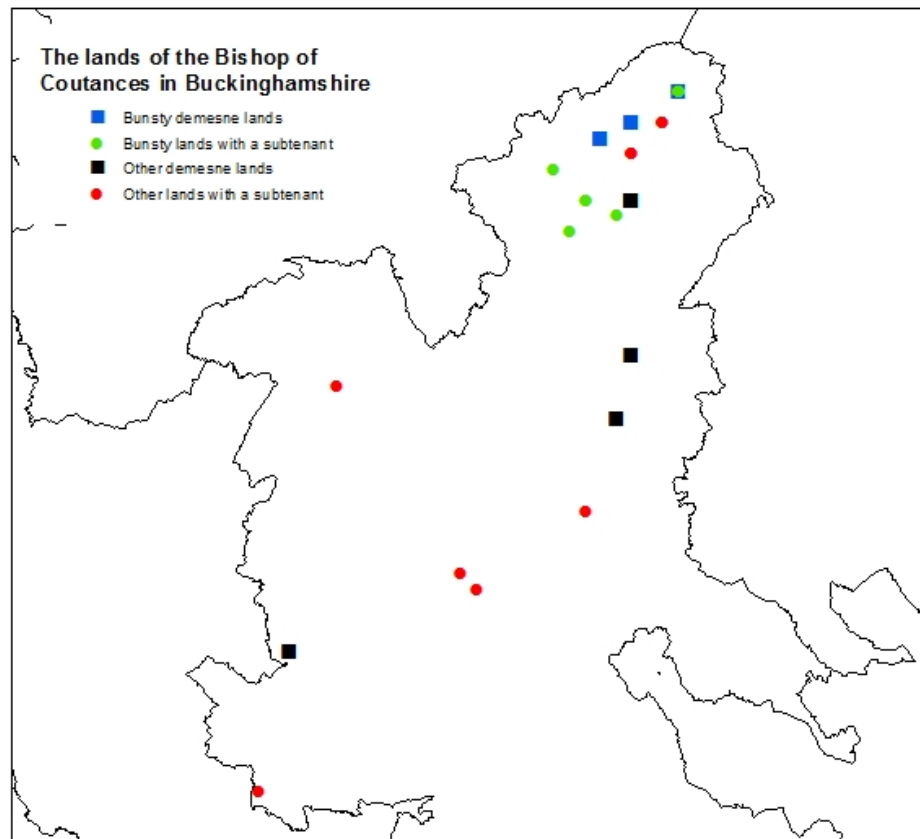


Figure 17 The estates of Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux

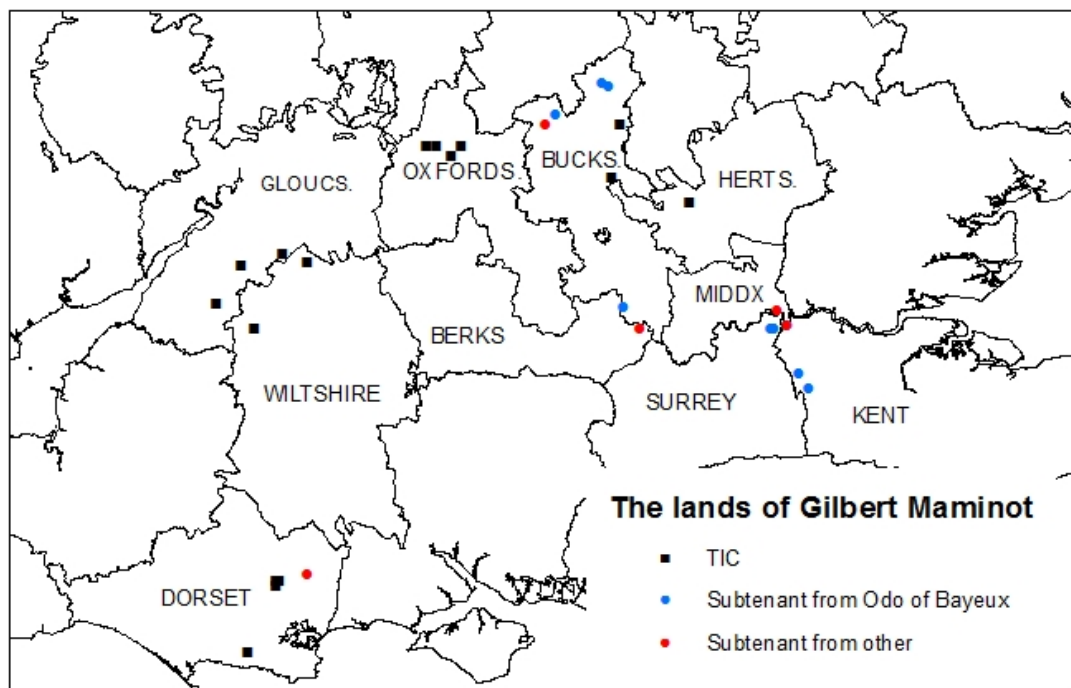


Table 7 The landed wealth of the Bunsty tenants-in-chief¹⁸³

1086 TIC	Total lands		Lands in Bunsty				Lands in Buckinghamshire			
	Total as TIC (£)	Kept in Demesne (£)	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in Demesne (£)	% of national demesne	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in Demesne (£)	% of national demesne
Odo of Bayeux	3,091.0	700.4	5.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	170.8	5.5	5.5	0.8
Robert, count of Mortain	2,020.0	876.1	3.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	112.2	5.6	53.0	6.0
Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances	840.3	252.1	33.0	3.9	19.0	7.5	89.7	10.7	52.0	20.6
Countess Judith	664.1	422.8	3.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	10.5	1.6	0.0	0.0
Walter Giffard	443.1	185.4	6.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	214.1	48.3	71.0	38.3
William fitzAnsculf	287.1	97.3	6.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	90.6	31.6	28.5	29.3
William Peverel	253.6	152.0	10.0	3.9	6.0	3.9	39.8	15.7	19.3	12.7
Hugh de Beauchamp	195.0	95.8	4.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	14.2	7.3	10.2	10.6
Winemar the Fleming	30.3	28.5	24.0	79.2	24.0	84.2	24.0	79.2	24.0	84.2
Ketil	0.4	0.4	0.4	70.0	0.4	70.0	0.4	100.0	0.4	100.0
Total	7,824.9	2,810.8	95.6	-	49.4	-	766.2	-	263.9	-

¹⁸³ Based on Baxter, 'Unpublished Analysis using Palmer's database'.

Bunsty tenants-in-chief did not enfeoff subtenants en bloc, so the lands were further divided. Judith's Bunsty lands were held by four different men in 1086. Count Robert's two estates were held by Ivo and Humphrey.¹⁸⁴ Certain of the subtenants were significant men in their own right. The later descent of the lands shows that the Hugh holding from Walter Giffard in Ravenstone must be identified as Hugh de Bolbec, who held substantial estates from Walter across the country, as well as being a tenant-in-chief himself.¹⁸⁵ Odo of Bayeux's two estates in Bunsty were both held by Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux, in 1086.¹⁸⁶ Gilbert was part of the inner circle of the Conqueror: he was the king's physician and chaplain, and was present at his death bed and funeral in 1087.¹⁸⁷ In addition to holding over seventy hides in chief, he held three pieces of land as a subtenant of the Conqueror and substantial lands as a subtenant of Odo, as well as two small estates from Maurice bishop of London and Remigius bishop of Lincoln.¹⁸⁸ The estates were scattered (Figure 17) and many of them were small, suggesting that the subtenancies were used to cement relationships with William and the three bishops, rather than to augment Gilbert's position in a particular area.

Langtree

In Langtree, Miles Crispin was the dominant tenant-in-chief in 1086. His lands accounted for 51 percent of the hundred's value. Though not one of the greatest magnates, he was of the second tier and held substantial lands in 1086.¹⁸⁹ Miles's origins are obscure, but he was probably a relative of Gilbert Crispin, abbot of

¹⁸⁴ Humphrey probably held a further £27 worth of land from Robert elsewhere: GDB 22v, 79-79v, 92v, 136v, 146v, 223-223v (Sussex, 10,117); (Dorset, 26,21-2); (Somerset, 19,70); (Hertfordshire, 15,5;12); (Buckinghamshire, 12,38); (Northamptonshire, 18,13-25; 53).

¹⁸⁵ Sanders, *Baronies*, 52, 98; Green, *Aristocracy*, 45; Lennard, *Rural England*, 54.

¹⁸⁶ Spear, *Personnel*, 170; Allen, 'Norman Episcopate', 276-86.

¹⁸⁷ *OV*, iv, 78-81.

¹⁸⁸ GDB 6v-7, 30, 31v, 56v, 76, 127v, 143-5 (Kent, 5,29; 36-7); (Surrey, 1,5; 5,10; 13); (Berkshire, 1,1); (Dorset, 1,31); (Middlesex, 3,7); (Buckinghamshire, 4,14; 33; 41-2; B2).

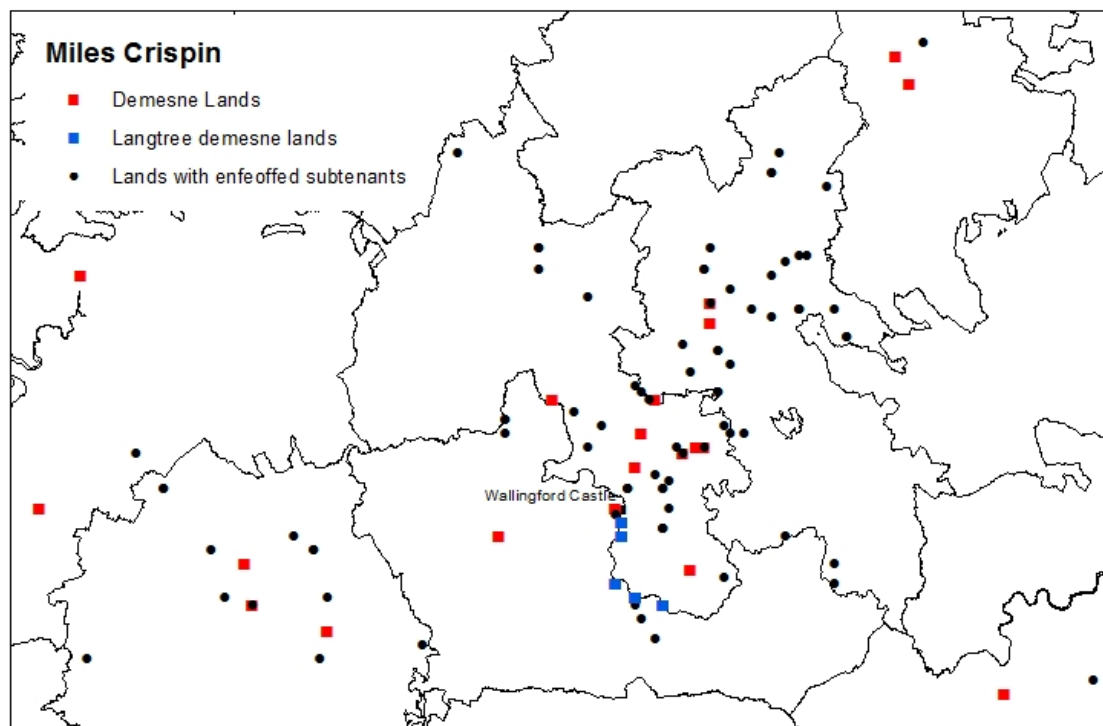
¹⁸⁹ Green, *Aristocracy*, 36-9.

Westminster (1085-1114), a member of a Norman family with lands in Anjou.¹⁹⁰ Miles was castellan of Wallingford and probably received much of his land as a perquisite of office, though it is suggested that he also received some by marriage to Wigot of Wallingford's granddaughter.¹⁹¹

Table 8 1086 tenants-in-chief in Langtree

1086 TIC	Hides	1066 (£)	Value 1086 (£)
Miles Crispin	38.0	£49 0s 0d	£63 0s 0d
Walter Giffard	10.0	£10 0s 0d	£20 0s 0d
Robert d'Oilly	20.0	£10 0s 0d	£15 0s 0d
Earl William fitzOsbern (d. 1071)	10.0	£10 0s 0d	£14 0s 0d
Alfred, nephew of Wigot	8.0	£8 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Reginald the archer	2.5	£2 10s 0d	£2 10s 0d
William de Warenne	1.5	£1 0s 0d	£2 0s 0d
Total	90.0	£90 10s 0d	£122 10s 0d

Figure 18 The estates of Miles Crispin



¹⁹⁰ *VCH Oxfordshire*, i, 382; R. Evans, 'Crispin, Gilbert, (c.1045-1117/18), theologian and abbot of Westminster', *ODNB*; Keats-Rohan, 'Devolution', 311.

¹⁹¹ Keats-Rohan, 'Devolution', 313-4.

Table 9 *The landed wealth of the Langtree tenants-in-chief*¹⁹²

1086 TIC	Total Lands		Lands in Langtree				Lands in Oxfordshire			
	Total as TIC (£)	Kept in demesne (£)	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in demesne (£)	% of national demesne	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in demesne (£)	% of national demesne
William de Warenne	1,182.2	540.0	2.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	14.0	1.2	12.0	2.2
Walter Giffard	443.1	185.4	20.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	71.5	16.1	20.0	10.8
Miles Crispin	438.4	244.3	63.0	14.4	63.0	25.8	202.8	46.3	129.0	52.8
Robert d'Oilly	366.4	201.6	15.0	4.1	15.0	7.4	208.8	57.0	100.0	49.6
Alfred nephew of Wigot	6.0	6.0	6.0	100.0	6.0	100.0	6.0	100.0	6.0	100.0
Reginald the archer	4.5	4.5	2.5	55.6	2.5	55.6	4.5	100.0	4.5	100.0
Total	2,440.6	1,181.8	108.5	-	86.5	-	507.6	-	271.5	-

¹⁹² Based on Baxter, 'Unpublished Analysis using Palmer's database'.

None of the other Langtree lords came close to Miles's dominance. William de Warenne was by far the most important Langtree landholder nationally, with lands worth nearly £1,200 across twelve counties. But he held just one and a half hides in Langtree, and did not retain it in demesne. Robert d'Oilly held considerably less than William but he held much more in Oxfordshire. Robert had come to England at the Conquest from OUILLY-le-Vicomte near Lisieux in Normandy.¹⁹³ In 1071 he built a castle at Oxford for the king and was castellan there for the rest of his life. This, plus his marriage to Wigot's daughter, helps to explain his extensive Oxfordshire estates.¹⁹⁴ Both Miles and Robert kept their Langtree lands in demesne. Robert's Goring estate was valuable, but it was also his only estate in southern Oxfordshire, so it may have offered him different resources. Miles's Oxfordshire lands were more concentrated in the south of the county, but he still chose to keep all of his Langtree lands in demesne. This can probably be explained by their proximity to his castle at Wallingford. For both of these men, their Langtree lands offered them a strategic position on the Thames. The ford at Wallingford was the last place downstream where the Thames could be crossed without a bridge or boat, which had proved important for the Conqueror in 1066, and would continue to be so throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁹⁵

Important men like William de Warenne and Walter Giffard did not retain a direct interest in Langtree. Walter's tenant Hugh de Bolbec also had extensive, widespread estates, so his direct interest in his lands in Langtree and Bunsty may have been limited. Though they were smaller men, Alfred nephew of Wigot and Reginald the archer could focus on their Langtree lands, so may have had some influence. Robert d'Oilly's

¹⁹³ Blair, 'D'Oilly, Robert'.

¹⁹⁴ Blair, 'D'Oilly, Robert'; J. Blair, 'An Introduction to the Oxfordshire Domesday' in *The Oxfordshire Domesday* (Alecto Ed., London, 1990), 13-15.

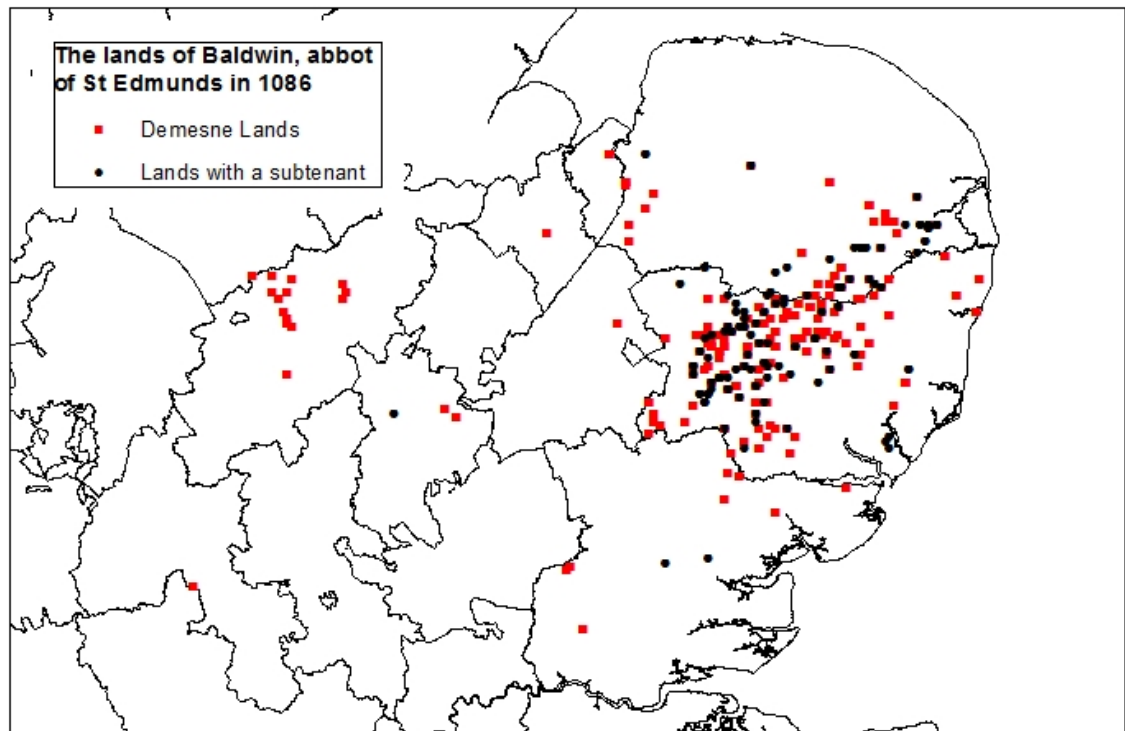
¹⁹⁵ Williams, *English*, 100-1; N. Hooper, 'An Introduction to the Berkshire Domesday' in *The Berkshire Domesday* (Alecto Ed., London, 1988), 7.

Langtree holding was valuable, and he was important in Oxfordshire, but in southern Oxfordshire and Langtree in particular Miles Crispin's dominance was striking.

Blackbourn/Bradmere

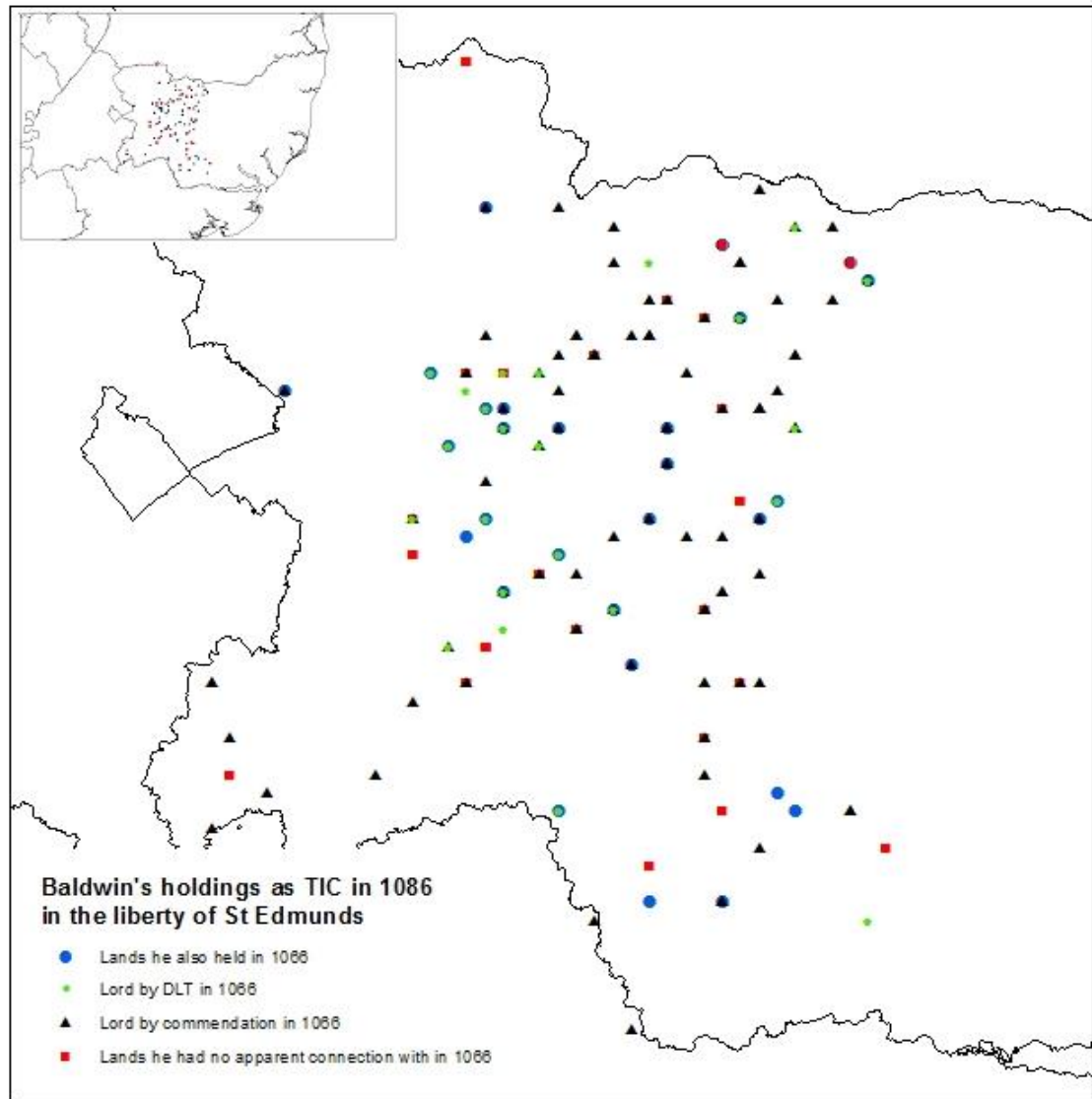
In Blackbourn/Bradmere, Abbot Baldwin held lands worth £89 15s 8d in 1086 when he had just held £27 15s 9d worth *TRE*. Most of his gains had been at the expense of his commended free men and sokemen (Figure 20). Abbot Baldwin had used the Conquest to hugely increase his abbey's holdings. Baldwin acted as the Confessor's physician, and continued to do so for William I and II; the favour he enjoyed as a Frenchman under Edward continued under the Norman kings.¹⁹⁶ By 1086, there were only three villis in the whole of Blackbourn/Bradmere where the abbot did not hold any land in chief. Baldwin's estates in western Suffolk represented the nucleus of his holdings in 1086 (Figure 19).

Figure 19 The 1086 estates of Abbot Baldwin of St Edmunds



¹⁹⁶ Gransden, 'Baldwin', 65-6; Bates, 'The Abbey and the Norman Conquest', 5-7; D. Banham, 'Medicine at Bury in the Time of Abbot Baldwin' in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Licence, 226-8, 238-45.

Figure 20 The 1086 estates of Abbot Baldwin in St Edmunds' liberty



Sixteen other men were tenants-in-chief in Blackbourn/Bradmere by 1086. These included King William and three of his greatest magnates: Earl Hugh, William de Warenne and Richard fitzGilbert de Clare.¹⁹⁷ Roger Bigod and Robert Malet were both less significant men than Hugh, William and Richard, but by 1086 they had accumulated substantial estates, particularly in East Anglia, and were important landholders.¹⁹⁸ Yet, none of these men would have wielded much influence in

¹⁹⁷ Hollister, 'Magnates and "Curiales"'; R. Mortimer, 'Clare, Richard de [Richard fitzGilbert] (1030x35-1087-90)', *ODNB*.

¹⁹⁸ Green, *Aristocracy*, 36-9, 84; A.F. Wareham, 'Bigod, Roger (I) (d. 1107)', *ODNB*; C.P. Lewis, 'The King and Eye: a study in Anglo-Norman politics', *EHR*, 104 (April, 1989), 569; C.P. Lewis, 'Malet, Robert (fl. 1066-1105)', *ODNB*; V. Brown, *Eye Priory cartulary and Charters*, ii (Woodbridge, 1994), 3-10.

Blackbourn/Bradmere. King William held six and a half carucates, but none of the other tenants-in-chief held more than three. Roger Bigod was sheriff of Norfolk, and held over £160 worth of land in Suffolk, but just £2 3s of this was in Blackbourn/Bradmere, and he did not retain it in demesne.¹⁹⁹ This was held by Stanheard, the son of Æthelwig of Thetford.²⁰⁰ Robert Malet held lands worth over £460 in Suffolk, but only £11 4s of this fell with the liberty of St Edmunds. He held less than two carucates in Blackbourn/Bradmere and retained just twenty-three acres in demesne. Richard fitzGilbert held just fifty-eight acres in Blackbourn, and retained only thirty acres in demesne, but he did have a presence in the surrounding area. Of his total lands, 26 percent, including what would be the caput of the Clare honour, fell within the liberty.

Table 10 1086 tenants-in-chief in Blackbourn/Bradmere

1086 TIC	Hundred	Carucates	Acres	Calc. carucates	1086 (£)
	Blackbourn	54.5	606	59.6	£76 1s 8d
Baldwin, abbot of St Edmunds	Bradmere	10.0	0	10.0	£13 14s 0d
	Total	64.5	606	69.6	£89 15s 8d
Robert Blund	Bradmere	20.5	653	25.9	£30 5s 8d
Peter de Valognes	Bradmere	11.0	185	12.5	£20 0s 0d
King William	Blackbourn	6.5	0	6.5	£16 6s 0d
Frodo, brother of abbot Baldwin	Blackbourn	2.0	40	2.3	£5 10s 0d
Earl Hugh	Bradmere	3.0	0	3.0	£2 7s 0d
William d'Ecois	Blackbourn	2.0	88	2.7	£2 4s 0d
Roger Bigod	Bradmere	1.0	40	1.3	£2 3s 0d
Sasselin	Bradmere	1.5	37	1.8	£1 18s 0d
Robert Malet	Blackbourn	0.0	210	1.8	£1 16s 10d
Robert de Verly	Blackbourn	1.0	103	1.9	£1 10s 0d
Roger the Poitevin	Bradmere	1.0	40	1.3	£1 3s 0d
William de Warenne	Bradmere	0.5	4	0.5	£1 0s 0d
Hugh de Montfort	Bradmere	0.0	32	0.3	£0 15s 0d
Hermer de Ferrers	Blackbourn	0.5	0	0.5	£0 10s 0d
William de Parthenay - Encroachments	Blackbourn	0.0	78	0.7	£0 8s 0d
Free men in the king's hand	Bradmere	0.0	40	0.4	£0 4s 6d
Richard fitzGilbert	Blackbourn	0.0	58	0.5	£0 3s 0d
	Blackbourn	66.5	1,183	76.4	£104 9s 6d
Total	Bradmere	48.5	1,033	57.1	£73 10s 2d
	Blackbourn & Bradmere	115.0	2,216	133.5	£177 19s 8d

¹⁹⁹ Wareham, 'Bigod, Roger'.

²⁰⁰ Marten, 'Impact of Rebellion', 148.

Table 11 The landed wealth of the Blackbourn/Bradmere tenants-in-chief²⁰¹

1086 TIC	Total lands		Lands in Blackbourn/Bradmere				Lands in Suffolk			
	Total as TIC (£)	Kept in demesne (£)	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in demesne (£)	% of national demesne	As a TIC (£)	% of national lands	Kept in demesne (£)	% of national demesne
King William	16,129.3	14,464.4	16.3	0.1	16.3	0.1	637.7	4.0	630.8	4.4
William de Warenne	1,182.2	540.0	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	43.2	3.7	2.9	0.5
Earl Hugh	862.0	314.4	2.4	0.3	2.4	0.7	111.0	12.9	8.8	2.8
Richard fitzGilbert	784.7	369.2	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	284.2	36.2	166.6	45.1
Baldwin, abbot of St Edmunds	675.5	504.8	89.8	13.3	55.6	11.0	524.4	77.6	395.5	78.3
Robert Malet	588.6	313.0	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.1	465.7	79.1	223.1	71.3
Roger Bigod	463.4	185.8	2.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	160.9	34.7	46.2	24.9
Hugh de Montfort	404.8	233.7	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.3	93.9	23.2	55.2	23.6
Roger the Poitevin	253.7	171.8	1.2	0.5	1.2	0.7	105.3	41.5	90.8	52.9
Peter de Valognes	179.1	103.5	20.0	11.2	20.0	19.3	20.1	11.2	20.1	19.4
William d'Ecois	131.6	90.0	2.2	1.7	1.2	1.3	10.4	7.9	4.6	5.1
Hermer de Ferrers	90.5	62.7	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.8
Robert Blund	50.9	42.7	30.3	59.5	27.3	63.9	32.9	64.6	29.7	69.6
Frodo, brother of Abbot Baldwin	44.7	44.2	5.5	12.3	5.5	12.4	29.5	66.0	29.5	66.7
Sasselin	19.8	19.8	1.9	9.6	1.9	9.6	1.9	9.6	1.9	9.6
Robert de Verly	6.5	6.5	1.5	23.1	1.5	23.1	1.5	23.1	1.5	23.1
William de Parthenay	0.7	0.7	0.4	57.1	0.4	57.1	0.7	100.0	0.7	100.0
Free men in the king's hand	0.2	0.2	0.2	100.0	0.2	100.0	0.2	100.0	0.2	100.0
Total	21,868.2	17,467.4	178.2	-	135.3	-	2,524.0	-	1,708.6	-

²⁰¹ Based on Baxter, 'Unpublished Analysis using Palmer's database'.

The only two men who challenged the abbot's dominance in these hundreds were Robert Blund and Peter de Valognes. Whilst the abbot had enfeoffed tenants on some of his Blackbourn/Bradmere lands, Robert kept most, and Peter kept all, of their lands in these hundreds in demesne. Robert was a less substantial man than the abbot or Peter, holding around £50 worth of lands in chief in 1086. However, he held just under a fifth of Blackbourn/Bradmere in terms of value, and this accounted for 60 percent of his total holdings, so he would have been important locally. Unlike his antecessor Aki, his lands were concentrated in one area, not spread across numerous counties. Bradmere was also the centre of Peter's Suffolk interests, and his Suffolk lands accounted for 20 percent of his total demesne lands.

Though a few of the tenants-in-chief, like William de Parthenay and Robert de Verly, were less significant men, the majority held at least £50 worth of land in 1086, and half held more than £200. They were mostly men of means, and many were of national importance, but locally their power was limited by the abbot. Nonetheless, though the abbot's tenurial dominance was more complete in 1086 than it was in 1066, he had much more powerful men as his neighbours than he had in 1066. At both points, most men held just a few carucates each, but by 1086 most of those men wielded national influence, whilst in 1066 they tended to be small, local landholders.

Landholding Structures

Table 12 shows the mean number of tenants-in-chief holding in each vill in 1086, and it is striking that there tended to be more tenants-in-chief in Blackbourn/Bradmere vills, than in Langtree and Bunsty. This is exactly what would be expected, as eastern

England tended to be less manorialised.²⁰² The Norman Conquest had enabled tenants-in-chief to acquire the lands of free men and sokemen,²⁰³ and had, to some extent, simplified the landholding structures in Blackbourn/Bradmere, but still vill s were often divided between several tenants-in-chief. This was exacerbated by the tendency to enfeoff tenants on just part of the land, so many of the vill s were more divided than Table 12 might suggest. This would have affected the power exercised by lords, and the extent to which communities would coalesce around either vill or manor groupings.

Table 12 The number of tenants-in-chief in each vill

Hundred	Number of vill s	Mean number of TIC per vill
Blackbourn/Bradmere	35	2.1
Bunsty	11	1.9
Langtree	11	1.1
Total	57	1.9

1.2.3 Conclusion

Changes are evident in each of these hundreds by 1086 in terms of personnel, status of landholders and landholding structures. Perhaps the biggest change occurred in Bunsty: in 1066, none of the landholders were particularly important in a national context, but by 1086 most of the tenants-in-chief were substantial landholders. Moreover, no one in 1066 enjoyed the same dominance that the bishop of Coutances had by 1086. However, in other ways Bunsty provides the most continuity, as Ketil and Eadgifu were both still holding there in 1086. Similarly, in Langtree, Miles Crispin's dominance was unparalleled *TRE*. Nonetheless, though he was more important nationally than Wigot, he may have had similar priorities. Wigot has been associated with a garrison at

²⁰² *DBB*, 22-4; Douglas, *East Anglia*, 3; Homans, 'The Frisians', 197-8; Postgate, 'Field systems of East Anglia', 306; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 21.

²⁰³ *DBB*, 128; Lewis, 'Invention', 133-4.

Wallingford where Miles was the castellan after the Conquest, and both had widespread lands, with a particular concentration around Wallingford. Blackbourn/Bradmere exhibits the most continuity, but this may be misleading. Abbot Baldwin was dominant at both points, but he had improved his position by 1086 by appropriating the lands of huge numbers of free men and sokemen: survival and continuity in personnel could obscure substantial structural changes.

1.3 Late thirteenth-century lords

Across the two centuries after Domesday there had been extensive subinfeudation in all three hundreds, and fragmentation of manors in every hundred except Langtree. In 1066 and 1086 there was variety in terms of the wealth and status of the lords holding in each hundred, and this was also the case in 1279-80. Each of the three hundreds contained important lords who would have had access to the king and influence on a national scale, down to those whose interests were purely local. Some lords were members of an established line that had held their manors since Domesday, but other manors had fragmented or changed hands through sale, marriage or inheritance on several occasions, and this may have affected the way that lordship was exercised.²⁰⁴ A manor's location and its relative importance in relation to the lord's other estates could also influence seigniorial choices.²⁰⁵ Tables 13-15 list the manorial lords in each hundred, the chain of tenure up to the king (where specified in the rolls) and the size of their demesne arable land. Most lords held their demesne land from one source, but others had built up their manors through gaining smaller pieces of land from more than one individual. The most notable example in these hundreds was John de Morewell, who had built up a small demesne in Stoke Goldington, Bunsty, from four different sources: he held part directly from King Edward, part from the countess of Arundel, and part

²⁰⁴ C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain, 850-1520* (London, 2002), 151.

²⁰⁵ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 100-1.

from the two other manorial lords in the vill, Aymer de Noers and Miles of Hastings. These tables present a static picture and they may not be comprehensive, but they give some idea of the landholding structures in each hundred in the late thirteenth century.

Table 13 Manorial lords in Bunsty, 1279-80

Vill	Manorial Lord	Chain of tenure up to the King	Demesne Lands		
			Hides	Virgates	Acres
Gayhurst	William de Noers	William de Say, of King Edward	1.0	0.0	0.0
Hanslope	Earl William de Beauchamp	King Edward	0.0	0.0	805.5
	Robert of Tathall	William de Beauchamp, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	200.0
	John son of John of Hanslope	William de Beauchamp, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	188.0
	William Tolus	William de Beauchamp, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	90.0
	Rector of Hanslope Church	?William de Beauchamp	0.0	0.0	41.0
	Roger of Birchmore	William de Beauchamp, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	57.0
Haversham	Matilda daughter of Nicholas of Haversham	King Edward (of Peverel honour)	0.0	0.0	386.0
	John of Haversham	Baldwin de Belauney, of Matilda daughter of John of Haversham, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	36.0
Lathbury	Heirs of William Daubeney	Richard de Beauchamp, of Robert le Strange, of King Edward William de Noers, of King Edward	3.0	1.5	89.5
	Edmund del Stocking	Heirs of William Daubeney, ?, of King Edward	0.0	3.0	66.8
	Abbot of Lavendon	Baldwin Wake, of King Edward	0.5	1.5	30.0
Lavendon	Reginald de Grey	John de Wahulle, of King Edward Fulk of Rycote, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	35.0
	John Pever	Baldwin Wake, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	80.0
Little Linford	Thomas de Hauvill	Roger de Somery, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	110.0
Ravenstone	Prior of Ravenstone	King Edward	0.0	0.0	50.0
	Alice de Bouteby	Earl Richard de Vere, of Earl Gilbert de Clare, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	24.0
	William Barentin	Earl Richard de Vere, of Earl Gilbert de Clare, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	25.0
Stoke Goldington	Miles of Hastings	King Edward (of Peverel honour)	0.0	0.0	128.8
	Aymer de Noers	King Edward (of Peverel honour)	0.0	0.0	122.8
	John de Morewell	King Edward	0.0	0.0	37.0
		Countess Isabel of Arundel, of King Edward			
		Miles of Hastings, of King Edward Aymer de Noers, of King Edward			
Eakley	William Mortimer	Waleran Mortimer, of Baldwin Wake, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	7.5
Tyringham	Roger son of John of Tyringham	Roger de Somery, of King Edward	0.0	0.0	120.0
Filgrave	John son of John Clerk	Abbot of Lavendon, of Baldwin Wake, of Baldwin de Bidoneys, of King Edward	0.0	0.5	0.0
Weston Underwood	William de Noers	Thomas de Clinton, of King Edward	2.0	0.0	0.0
	John Pever	John de Beauchamp, of Baldwin Wake, of King Edward	3.0	0.0	0.0
Total			9.5	6.5	2,729.8

Table 14 Manorial lords in Langtree, 1279-80

Vill	Manorial Lord	Chain of tenure up to the king	Demesne Lands	
			Carucates	Virgates
Checkendon with Little Stoke	John Marmion	Philip Marmion, of King Edward	4	0
		Monks of Barbery, of Philip Marmion, of King Edward		
Crowmarsh Gifford	Robert de Vere	William de Valence, of King Edward	0	6
	Ralph Pippard	Robert de Vere,[?of William de Valence], of King Edward	0	3
Gatehampton	Peter de Coudray	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	1	0
Goring	Hugh de Druval	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	2	0
Ipsden	Laurence Basset	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	1	0
	Richard de Neubaud	Walter of Huntercombe, of William de Valence, of King Edward	1	0
Mapledurham Chausy	John de Chausy	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	2	0
Mongewell	William Loveday	William de Cryel, of Isabella de Fortibus, of King Edward	2	3
Newnham Murren	Walter of Huntercombe	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	2	0
North Stoke	John de Rivers	Alan de la Zouche, of Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	3	0
Whitchurch	Isabella de Fortibus	Edmund, earl of Cornwall, of King Edward	2	0
Total			20	12

The most apparent continuity between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls can be observed in Blackbourn hundred, where the abbot of Bury St Edmunds was still dominant in the late thirteenth century. The surviving copies of the Hundred Rolls overemphasise that dominance because they generally only refer to lands that pertained to the abbey. For example, they record that William Comyn held 100 acres in Great Fakenham from the abbot, but do not make it clear that he actually held the majority of the manor in chief.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, St Edmunds held demesne manors in seven villis. Except for Alexander of Wordwell's 360 acres in Wordwell and Reginald Peche's 320 acres in Stowlangtoft, the abbey's demesnes were much larger than any others that they had sublet.²⁰⁷ Even on manors held by the abbey's tenants, the abbot had often retained some land, or had some tenants holding directly from him. Though St Edmunds' influence is overstated because of the bias of the copier, the entries show that the abbey had at least some interest in the majority of Blackbourn villis in 1279-80. As he also had jurisdiction over the hundred to the exclusion of the sheriff, the abbot's influence would have been extensive.

²⁰⁶ *RH*, ii, 151; TNA C132/14/15.

²⁰⁷ See also Bailey, *Suffolk*, 33.

Table 15 Manorial lords in Blackbourn, 1279-80

Vill	Manorial Lord	Chain of tenure up to the king	Demesne Acres
Bardwell	Ralph of Bardwell	St Edmunds, of King Edward	110.0
Barnham	Robert son of William de Hoo	Peter of Thelnetham, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	245.0
	Gilbert de Hay	St Edmunds, of King Edward	102.0
	William Playford	St Edmunds, of King Edward	145.0
Barningham	Eustace of Barningham	St Edmunds, of King Edward	88.0
		Eye Barony, of King Edward	12.0
Coney Weston	St Edmunds	King Edward	340.0
	John de Braham	St Edmunds, of King Edward	7.5
	William son of Andrew	St Edmunds, of King Edward	4.5
Culford	St Edmunds	King Edward	286.0
Elmswell	St Edmunds	King Edward	200.0
Great Ashfield	William de Criketot	King Edward	?
Great Fakenham	William Comyn	St Edmunds, of King Edward	100.0
Hinderclay	St Edmunds	King Edward	320.0
Hunston	Lady Margaret	St Edmunds, of King Edward	80.0
	John of Hunston	Lady Margaret, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	64.0
	William Godbarlich	Lady Margaret, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	60.0
Ingham	St Edmunds	King Edward	350.0
	Adam of Ingham	Richard of Bruce, of Lancaster honour, of King Edward	?
Ixworth Thorpe	William of Pakenham	St Edmunds, of King Edward	120.0
Langham	Lambert of Langham	St Edmunds, of King Edward	164.0
Little Ashfield	William de Criketot	St Edmunds, of King Edward	18.0
	Thomas Nowel	St Edmunds, of King Edward	?
Little Livermere	Bartholomew son of Henry of Little Livermere	St Edmunds, of King Edward	180.5
	William of Livermere	St Edmunds, of King Edward	86.0
	Lady of Livermere	Peter of Thelnetham, of Earl Richard de Vere, of St Edmunds, of Mortain Barony, of King Edward	109.0
Rickinghall	St Edmunds	King Edward	400.0
Sapiston	Alexander of Wordwell	St Edmunds, of King Edward	82.0
Stanton	St Edmunds	King Edward	240.0
Stowlangtoft	Reginald Peche	St Edmunds; of King Edward	320.0
	William of Norwich	Reginald Peche, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	50.0
	Elias son of Odo	Reginald Peche, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	25.0
	Henry son of Ralph of Ixworth	Reginald Peche, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	40.0
	Walter of Langtoft	Reginald Peche, of St Edmunds, of King Edward	32.0
Walsham-le-Willows	Robert de Valognes	King Edward	317.0
	Robert de Valognes	St Edmunds, of King Edward	12.0
West Stow	Isabella da. of Walter de Horningsherth	St Edmunds, of King Edward	60.0
	Hugh son of John de Cotton	St Edmunds, of King Edward	15.0
	William West	St Edmunds, of King Edward	20.0
	William of Park	?	?
Wordwell	Alexander of Wordwell	St Edmunds, of King Edward	360.0
Total			5,164.5

There was also some continuity in Langtree, as Edmund, earl of Cornwall held much of the land that had been held by Wigot of Wallingford *TRE* and Miles Crispin *TRW*. By the early twelfth century Miles had also received much of Robert d'Oilly's lands and some of Earl Roger's which had previously been held by Wigot, and the honour of

Wallingford was formed from his holdings. The honour had been granted to Henry III's brother Richard in 1231 and passed to his son Edmund in 1272.²⁰⁸ Edmund was the most important lord in Langtree in terms of his national influence, and six and a half of the eleven villis pertained to his honour; moreover, his tenurial lordship in the hundred was augmented by his lordship over the four and a half Chiltern hundreds. However, unlike Miles Crispin in Domesday, Edmund held no demesne land in Langtree in 1279-80, so his day-to-day influence would have been limited.

The most important manorial lord in Bunsty in 1279-80 was William de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick.²⁰⁹ William's manor in Hanslope was the largest in the hundred, and he had inherited it, along with his title, from his uncle William Mauduit; the Mauduit family had only held the title for one generation, so this was not a well-established comital family.²¹⁰ Nonetheless, at his death in 1298 de Beauchamp held lands across nine counties.²¹¹ He was a man of national significance, who enjoyed Edward I's favour and served regularly administratively and militarily, particularly distinguishing himself in the Scottish wars.²¹² This may have made his influence in Hanslope less personal. Hanslope had been the caput of the Mauduit's lands, so it would probably have received more active attention before they inherited the earldom.

Though much less important than de Beauchamp on a national scale, the de Noers family were probably influential in Bunsty hundred. They were well established in the

²⁰⁸ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 11; Sanders, *Baronies*, 93.

²⁰⁹ P. Coss, 'Beauchamp, William (IV)', *ODNB*; E. Mason, 'The resources of the earldom of Warwick in the thirteenth century', *Midland History*, 3 (1975-6), 67-75.

²¹⁰ See Sanders, *Baronies*, 50-1 (for Hanslope barony); 75-6 (for Salwerpe, held by the de Beauchamps); 93-4 (for Warwick). *CIPM*, i, 387; iii, 477. *CFR*, 1256-7, 598.

²¹¹ *CIPM*, ii, 477.

²¹² Coss, 'Beauchamp, William'.

hundred, and had held there since the eleventh century.²¹³ William de Noers' main Bunsty holding was in Gayhurst; he was also mesne lord for one sixth of a knight's fee in Lathbury and held lands in Northamptonshire.²¹⁴ He had reinforced his position in the locality by marriage to one of Peter of Goldington's heiresses, who inherited rights to Stoke Goldington in the same hundred. By 1279-80, Stoke Goldington was held by his son Aymer.

In Langtree, Walter of Huntercombe was probably of an equivalent status to William de Noers in Bunsty. Walter held Newnham Murren in Langtree, and was also mesne lord between Richard de Neubaud and William de Valence in Ipsden.²¹⁵ He was of some importance in the locality, and his family's main manor, for which they were named, was contiguous with Langtree. However, unlike the de Noers family who had used marriages across two generations to augment their position in their own locality, the Huntercombes had chosen to form more distant alliances, and shrewd marriages across two generations had accrued substantial lands in Northumberland for the family. Walter was regularly in the north, on the king's business and his own,²¹⁶ so arguably his lordship in Langtree would have been more distant.

Walter's Newnham manor was held from the honour of Wallingford; the other 'knights' of Wallingford were of varying status, some with wider interests than Walter, and others, like Peter de Coudray, Hugh Druval and John de Chaussy, who had a purely local focus. Isabella de Fortibus held Whitchurch from the honour and Mongewell in chief, but she did not retain her Mongewell manor in demesne. She was countess of Aumale

²¹³ GDB 145 (Buckinghamshire, 4,42).

²¹⁴ *CCR*, 1279-88, 415.

²¹⁵ For the Huntercombes: P.M. Briers, *The History of Nuffield* (Oxford, 1939), 24-50.

²¹⁶ For example: *CPR*, 1292-1301, 202, 437-8. Briers, *Nuffield*, 30-5.

by marriage and of Devon by inheritance, lady of the Isle of Wight, and one of the richest landholders in England, so of much higher status than the other Langtree 'knights' of Wallingford.²¹⁷

Most of the manorial lords in Blackbourn in 1279-80 were of just local importance, like Ralph of Bardwell. As well as holding 110 acres demesne in Bardwell, he also had a few tenants in Stanton and Barnham, and his mother Margaret held Hunston in dower. William of Pakenham was a more substantial man than Ralph. The Hundred Rolls describe him holding 120 acres from the abbot in Ixworth Thorpe, but he also held more land in this vill from the Valognes barony.²¹⁸ His main holding was in Norton, also Blackbourn, and he also had lands in Bardwell and Great Ashfield. His other holdings mostly fell within Suffolk and some in Norfolk. His interests and his powerbase were local, but more extensive than most of the other Blackbourn lords.²¹⁹

As in 1066 and 1086, there was great variety in the status and interests of the manorial lords in these three hundreds. Their wealth, social status and personal interest in their lands would have varied to a similar degree. Except for the very smallest of lords, most of the men and women exercising lordship in these hundreds also held land elsewhere. In all three hundreds there was extensive subinfeudation. Everywhere except Langtree there was also manorial fragmentation. Small manors were not necessarily just held by insignificant lords, but this fragmentation did allow lesser men to become lords of manors. The high population, relative social freedom and prominence of partible

²¹⁷ B. English, 'Forz, Isabella de, *suo jure* countess of Devon, and countess of Aumale (1237-1293)', *ODNB*. See also N. Denholm-Young, 'Edward I and the Sale of the Isle of Wight', *EHR*, 44 (1929), 433-438; M. Mate, 'Profit and Productivity on the Estates of Isabella de Forz (1260-92)', *EcHR*, 33, 3, (1980) 326-334.

²¹⁸ *Pakenham*, 4.

²¹⁹ *Pakenham*, 1-4.

inheritance in Suffolk facilitated the fragmentation of landholdings, and resulted in the majority of the population having less land per head. However, it also facilitated the upward mobility of certain free men, who were able to accumulate land and become lords of their own small manors. Moreover, the dominance of St Edmunds in Blackbourn hundred prevented more important lords from gaining a foothold there. In 1086 many important tenants-in-chief held land in Blackbourn, but because their holdings tended to be small, few kept them in hand, and this trend was even more pronounced in 1279-80 than it had been in 1086.

This is a static picture, and cannot represent the changing personnel and priorities of landholders. Marriages across two generations meant that the Huntercombe's focus shifted from their lands in southern Oxfordshire to their new estates in Northumberland. Walter of Huntercombe's absences from his southern lands became more frequent and extended with the Scottish wars, which he, like many of the manorial lords in these case studies, was actively involved in, showing how national politics could affect lordship on a local scale. Henry II's twelfth-century legal reforms meant that many knightly lords were increasingly called upon to serve the crown, and the load placed upon these men increased across the thirteenth century. These services could be viewed as burdens that took men away from their lands, but they also provided opportunities to accumulate more lands.²²⁰ John Pever's extensive estates in Bunsty and Buckinghamshire more generally had been accumulated by his grandfather Paul, whilst he served as sheriff of Buckinghamshire (1239-40) and steward of the royal household (1245-51).²²¹ This was not new. Wigot of Wallingford and Engelric the priest both used their administrative

²²⁰ R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000-1500* (Manchester, 1996), 134.

²²¹ *Buckinghamshire, 1286*, 43-4, 85, 346; A. Polden, 'A Crisis of the Knightly Class? Inheritance and Office among the Gentry of Thirteenth-Century Buckinghamshire' in *Regionalism and Revision: The Crown and its Provinces in England 1200-1650*, eds. P. Fleming, A. Gross, J.R. Lander (London, 1998), 41-3. *CRR*, xviii, 929, 950, 962; *CFR*, 1250-1, 789.

roles to accumulate land before and after the Conquest, but the governmental changes meant that there were greater opportunities for a wider spectrum of people to do so.²²²

The changes in service owed to the king, the status of lords and the extent of their landholdings were also accompanied by changes in the trappings of lordship. Using the surveys to consider land and fragmentation of manors provides an insight into lordship across these two centuries, but it is important also to explore how that lordship was expressed and experienced in a local setting through the physical representations of lordly wealth and its impact upon the landscape.

1.4 Lordship in the landscape

The wealth of a lord ‘cannot be measured entirely in acres or coins’; status and reputation were equally as important.²²³ A lord needed the trappings of lordship because they could be financially rewarding, but they also gave the impression of power and formed the identifying characteristics of the upper classes.²²⁴ In creating parks and building castles, mills and churches, lords were making a physical declaration of their ownership of the land, as well as asserting their power over the people that lived on that land. This should not be divorced from practical purposes: parks provided hunting grounds and grazing; castles were dwellings, centres of defence and administration; mills were needed to grind corn; and churches were places of worship. Still, because they were often closely associated with higher status individuals, they could also have a coercive function that would not have been lost on the population literally living in their shadows.

²²² Dyer, *Making*, 150-1.

²²³ Dyer, *Making*, 153; C. Dyer, ‘The Ineffectiveness of Lordship in England, 1200-1400’, *P&P*, supplement 2 (2007), 72.

²²⁴ Dyer, *Standards*, 18-9, 89-90; Crouch, *English*, 38-9, 53-54, 185, 193.

Castles

Recent historiography has shifted away from functional, military interpretations of castles towards the symbolic importance of these buildings.²²⁵ Coulson has been particularly instrumental in refocusing castle studies, emphasising that '[castle building] was generated by status-aspiration more than by fear of violence.'²²⁶ By contrast, Platt has forcefully argued that this emphasis in castle studies is overly dismissive of military needs.²²⁷ The perceived dichotomy between function and form is unnecessary however, as military might would be reinforced by the powerful symbolism of these buildings.²²⁸

Even if castles were primarily impressive, high status dwellings, castle building in the immediate post-Conquest period must have had a coercive purpose.²²⁹ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* directly associates castle building with oppression, stating that Bishop Odo and Earl William 'built castles far and wide throughout this country, and distressed the wretched folk'.²³⁰ Following King William's death in 1087, reflecting upon his legacy, the chronicler recorded that 'he had castles built/And poor men sore oppressed.'²³¹ Orderic Vitalis's references to castles give the same impression, associating the building of castles with attempts to maintain control over the population in the post-Conquest period.²³²

²²⁵ For a summary of earlier historiography, see: C. Coulson, 'Freedom to Crenellate by Licence – An Historiographical Revision', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 86-136. Notable revisionist works include: C. Coulson, 'Cultural realities and reappraisals in English castle-study', *JMH*, 22, 2 (1996), 171-208; O.H. Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes: Power, Community and Fortification in Medieval England* (London, 2002); R. Liddiard, *Castles in Context: Power, Symbolism and Landscape, 1066 to 1500* (Macclesfield, 2005). These ideas have also been taken on in more general historiography, for example: Faith, *Peasantry*, 183-4, 192-3; Saul, *For Honour*, 53-4.

²²⁶ Coulson, 'Freedom to Crenellate', 91-2.

²²⁷ C. Platt, 'Revisionism in Castle Studies: A Caution', *Medieval Archaeology*, 51 (2007), 83-102.

²²⁸ For example, Liddiard, *Castles in Context*, 35, 39.

²²⁹ Stenton, *ASE*, 471-2.

²³⁰ *ASC D s.a.* 1066.

²³¹ *ASC E s.a.* 1087.

²³² *OV*, ii, 202-3, 218-21.

The extent of change wrought by the Conquest can be questioned. Some continuity between castle sites and Anglo-Saxon centres of lordship has been identified.²³³ Even so, the new castles looked different to Anglo-Saxon fortifications, and they involved the appropriation of space, building materials and labour on a great scale.²³⁴ The appearance of castles has been described as the ‘quintessential badge of the Conquest’.²³⁵ Even in a built up modern landscape castles are impressive; their potential visual impact in the medieval landscape should not be underestimated.

Possessing a castle was not a universal feature of lordship across this period, and the number of castles varied across different regions. Great lords would not have built castles at every manor, and for smaller lords castle building would not have been a viable financial option.²³⁶ Miles Crispin, tenant-in-chief of much of Langtree in Domesday, did not have a castle in this hundred, but he was castellan of the royal castle at Wallingford, which would have been in clear sight for many of Langtree’s inhabitants.²³⁷ The proximity of Wallingford castle proved significant during Stephen’s reign, when a siege castle was built at Crowmarsh because Brian fitzCount was holding Wallingford against the king.²³⁸ Crowmarsh castle was successfully defended when attacked in 1153, but it was destroyed by Stephen shortly afterwards as part of a peace agreement.²³⁹ Though this castle was not long-lived, its existence would have been

²³³ Faith, *Peasantry*, 192-3; Coulson, ‘Cultural Realities’, 172-3; Liddiard, *Castles in Context*, 38; R. Liddiard, ‘The Castle Landscapes of Anglo-Norman East Anglia: A Regional Perspective’ in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2005), 36; Creighton, *Castles*, 276-7; R. Fleming, ‘Land use and People’ in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, eds. J. Crick & E. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), 33-6.

²³⁴ Faith, *Peasantry*, 192.

²³⁵ Liddiard, *Castles in Context*, 12.

²³⁶ Liddiard, ‘Castle Landscapes’, 34-6.

²³⁷ CA, i, 10-3.

²³⁸ CA, ii, 387, 389n22, 566-7.

²³⁹ *Gesta Stephani*, 236-9; *HH*, 764-7.

hugely disruptive for Langtree's inhabitants, as the war was played out on their doorstep.

King identified the remnants of two castles within Blackbourn double-hundred: one at Hunston and one at Great Ashfield, but he missed the earthwork fortifications at Great Fakenham.²⁴⁰ Great Ashfield pertained to the Blund barony and Great Fakenham to the Valognes barony. These were small baronies, but the lords were of particular importance in the locality. In trying to retain their influence in the face of St Edmunds' tenurial and jurisdictional dominance, the building of a castle would have been an important declaration of power.

In north Buckinghamshire there were four castles within a six mile radius of the castle at Newport Pagnell, and two of these were in Bunsty hundred.²⁴¹ Lavendon castle was first mentioned in 1192, but it was probably in existence much earlier in the century.²⁴² Situated just north of the vill itself, the castle was built by the Biduns as the caput of their small honour of Lavendon, and passed along with the manor of Lavendon to the Pevers in the 1240s.²⁴³ The other Bunsty castle was at Castlethorpe, a secondary settlement of Hanslope. This castle was probably built during Stephen's reign, when it was held by William Mauduit for Empress Matilda.²⁴⁴ It continued to be used as the

²⁴⁰ CA, ii, 456-8; Dymond, D., (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged edition* (Sudbury, 1999), 58-9.

²⁴¹ A. Pettifer, *English Castles: A guide by counties* (Woodbridge, 1995), 23; A.C. Chibnall, *Sherington: Fiefs and Fields of a Buckinghamshire village* (Cambridge, 1965), 23-4.

²⁴² CA, i, 28; Pettifer, *English Castles*, 23n4, 24-5; T. Brown and P. Everson, 'Earthworks at Lavendon', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 45 (2005), 45-9; N. Pevsner and E. Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (London, 1994), 428-9; *VCH Buckinghamshire*, iv, 380.

²⁴³ Pevsner and Williamson, *Buckinghamshire*, 428-9.

²⁴⁴ CA, i, 27; Pettifer, *English Castles*, 9, 23n5, 41; Pevsner and Williamson, *Buckinghamshire*, 213-4; *VCH Buckinghamshire*, iv, 349; *Inventory of Historical Monuments of Buckinghamshire*, ii, 80-2.

caput of the Mauduit's barony, but it was destroyed by Falkes de Bréauté in 1215 after Robert Mauduit rose against King John.²⁴⁵

A combination of local factors, including the identity of the lord, power balances in the region and political circumstances, influenced the location of castles.²⁴⁶ Few of the Langtree lords in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries had a substantial tenurial base in the hundred that required a castle. The situation was similar in Blackbourn, where most manors were small and most manorial lords were local men overshadowed by the abbot of Bury. It is no coincidence that two castles in this double-hundred were in villis held by the Blund barony and the Valognes barony respectively: a declaration of their lords' power in the face of Bury's dominance. Similarly, the two castles in Bunsty were built at the caput of two baronies, held by the Mauduits and the Biduns respectively.

There were certainly more castles in the regions of these three hundreds at the end of the thirteenth century than there had been in the eleventh century, but some which had been built in the twelfth century had not survived. There was not a castle associated with every manor, and they should be viewed as only one type of lordly dwelling. Manor houses have left less obvious traces in the modern landscape, but the social statement made by the construction of a large dwelling should not be underestimated, even if it was not fortified.²⁴⁷ Across this period there was an increasing physical division of the space occupied by elites and the rest of the population, encouraging the building of moats and defended walls.²⁴⁸ William de Beauchamp's licence to crenellate his house

²⁴⁵ Pettifer, *English Castles*, 9; *VCH Buckinghamshire*, iv, 349-50.

²⁴⁶ Creighton, *Castles*, 36.

²⁴⁷ A. Emery, 'Late-medieval houses as an expression of social status', *Historical Research*, 78, 200 (2005), 142, 144; *CA*, i, xv-xvi; Faith, *Peasantry*, 193; O.H. Creighton, *Designs Upon the Land: Elite Landscapes of the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2009), 125.

²⁴⁸ P. Page, *Barentin's Manor* (Oxford, 2005), 156-7.

and build a wall around his garden in Hanslope in 1292 illustrates this trend, as does James de la Plaunche's licence to crenellate his house at Haversham, Bunsty, in 1304.²⁴⁹ Adding such features to a manor house not only made them more defensible and separated the lord from the peasantry, but it also made a visual statement that the occupant was high status and in command of the surrounding landscape.

Churches

Though churches were religious buildings, they were often established by manorial lords who retained association with their foundations through their rights of patronage and the physical association of the church with the manorial complex.²⁵⁰ Many parish churches were built in the twelfth century, but Faith has shown that the association of churches with centres of lordship was already developing in the late Anglo-Saxon period, as lords began to exert greater control over the rest of the population.²⁵¹

The proliferation of stone parish churches has been associated with the Norman Conquest. However, the number of churches already in existence in the late Anglo-Saxon period should not be underestimated; moreover, much of the building or rebuilding of churches occurred in the twelfth century, rather than immediately after the Conquest.²⁵² Domesday records that there were approximately thirty churches in Blackbourn/Bradmere in 1086 (Appendix E). No churches were mentioned in the other two case studies, but some were certainly in existence. The church of Lavendon in Bunsty hundred still retains Anglo-Saxon features.²⁵³ In Langtree hundred, the name

²⁴⁹ *CPR*, 1281-1292, 497; 1301-07, 233.

²⁵⁰ Faith, *Peasantry*, 167, 191-2; Creighton, *Designs*, 56, 216-7; Creighton, *Castles*, 110-3.

²⁵¹ Faith, *Peasantry*, 167.

²⁵² Faith, *Peasantry*, 167, 192. H. Leyser, 'Piety, Religion, and the Church' in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England*, ed. N. Saul (Oxford, 1997), 185.

²⁵³ Pevsner and Williamson, *Buckinghamshire*, 428-9; K.A. Bailey, 'The Church in Anglo-Saxon Buckinghamshire c.650-c.1100', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 43 (2003), 71.

‘Whitchurch’ was first mentioned in a charter dateable 990x992, suggesting that there was a stone church there by the tenth century at the latest.²⁵⁴ Most other churches in the case studies can be traced in the written records or by archaeological remains to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

The church at Mongewell, Langtree, was first mentioned in 1184 when it was recorded that the bodies of people who died in this vill had previously been buried at the churches of Nuffield or Newnham Murren. The lord of Mongewell, who was also the patron of that church, gave the church of Nuffield one virgate of land and the church of Newnham four acres, so that Mongewell could be a ‘mother church’ and the villagers could bury their dead there.²⁵⁵ This shows that manorial lords took an interest in establishing churches in their vill. Lords were determined to have control over the local church and long-term disputes could arise over jurisdiction, which ultimately altered the landscape and interfered with parish structures. This was dramatically illustrated in Swaffham Prior, Staine hundred, Cambridgeshire, where two churches were built by rival lords in the twelfth century.²⁵⁶ Consecutive bishops of Ely issued acts that specified St Cyriac’s to be the sole parish church. St Mary’s persisted however, and eventually gained full parochial status.²⁵⁷ The particular interest of this case is that both churches were built in the same churchyard: a stark, visual representation of divided lordship and the ongoing conflict, making this a dispute for physical space as well as ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The battle for prominence can be seen in the structure of St Mary’s church itself, with its ‘adventurously designed’ octagonal tower, significant

²⁵⁴ S1494; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, 137; *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, ed. S.E. Kelly (Oxford, 2001), 534-5.

²⁵⁵ *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I*, ed. R.C. van Caenegem (London, 1990-1), ii, 609-10; *The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford, 1929-1936), iv, 415-6.

²⁵⁶ There is substantial evidence of 12th-century features at St Mary’s but little survives of the medieval church of St Cyriac’s. However it is mentioned in 12th-century documents and as it was assigned primacy over St Mary’s at this point, it may have been the earlier building. N. Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire* (Harmondsworth, 1970), 466-8; *EEA*, x, 47.

²⁵⁷ *EEA*, x, lxii-lxiii; 23-5; 47.

because it is much earlier than a similar tower at Ely.²⁵⁸ The innovative design shows the importance this lord placed on the primacy of his church. Both churches were relatively large, and situated on the highest point in the vill, so they towered over the surrounding settlement.²⁵⁹

Figure 21 The two churches in Swaffham Prior as they are today



The link between churches and manorial lords may have declined in the thirteenth century: bishops attempted to increase diocesan control at the expense of secular control; lords granted rights of advowson to religious houses as patronage; manorial fragmentation meant that fewer manor boundaries coincided with those of the parish; and increasingly the most important lords had their own private chapels.²⁶⁰ In some

²⁵⁸ *Historical Monuments*, xxxv, 116; Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, 466-7.

²⁵⁹ Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, 466.

²⁶⁰ M. Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology in Local Studies* (London, 1985), 50; N. Saul, 'The Gentry and the Parish' in *The Parish in late medieval England*, eds. C. Burgess and E. Duffy (Donington, 2006), 245-7.

places the link between lord and church remained strong, however.²⁶¹ In Castlethorpe, Bunsty, the church was actually within the castle walls, a blatant statement of the lord's ownership.²⁶² However, Creighton has pointed out that enclosing the church in this way prevented the castle or manorial *curia* from being a socially exclusive space as the local peasantry would have had regular access.²⁶³

Mills

Mills had an important role in the medieval economy, but their importance as symbols of lordship has also long been recognised.²⁶⁴ Mills were primarily for grinding grain, but were also used for fulling cloth and smelting metal amongst other tasks.²⁶⁵ All of the mills recorded in Domesday Book were watermills, the windmill being a late twelfth-century introduction to England.²⁶⁶ Langdon has shown that there was substantial growth in the number of watermills in the north and west from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, but stagnation in the south and east. However, from the late twelfth century, this was generally counteracted by the building of windmills.²⁶⁷

There were already substantial numbers of mills in each case study in 1086 (Appendix F).²⁶⁸ Blackbourn/Bradmere had the fewest relative to its size, 0.6 per settlement. Bunsty had 0.8 and Langtree had 0.9 per settlement. Some villas had more than one mill

²⁶¹ Saul, 'Gentry and the Parish', 254-60.

²⁶² Pevsner and Williamson, *Buckinghamshire*, 213-4; Creighton, *Castles*, 123.

²⁶³ Creighton, *Designs*, 216-7.

²⁶⁴ Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, 281; Gransden, *Bury*, 288; J. Langdon, 'Water-Mills and Windmills in the West Midlands, 1086-1500', *EcHR*, 44, 3 (1991), 424.

²⁶⁵ Gransden, *Bury*, 289.

²⁶⁶ Langdon, 'Water-Mills and Windmills', 433-4, 436; Gransden, *Bury*, 290.

²⁶⁷ J. Langdon, 'Inland water transport in Medieval England – the view from the mills: a response to Jones', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26, 1 (2000), 76-9.

²⁶⁸ For Buckinghamshire see: K.A. Bailey, 'Mills in Domesday Buckinghamshire' *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 39 (1999), 67-72.

whilst others had none, probably dependent upon the landscape and water-supply.²⁶⁹ In Blackbourn/Bradmere, some vills were bounded by the Little Ouse and the River Lark, but most of them were not on major waterways. All but two vills in Langtree were on the River Thames, and these were the only two that did not have mills in 1086. In Bunsty, all of the vills with mills were on the Great Ouse.

The surviving fragments of the Suffolk Hundred Rolls record that there were nine watermills in Blackbourn in 1279-80, and eleven windmills. Four of the watermills and six of the windmills were in vills which did not have a mill in Domesday, so if the mills elsewhere had persisted it would suggest that there had been an increase in this double-hundred. Gransden has argued that there was extensive mill building on Bury's estates from the twelfth century into the thirteenth.²⁷⁰ Technological advances allowed the building of windmills in settlements that had lacked sufficient water power to have mills in 1086.²⁷¹ Though total numbers cannot be assessed because of the fragmented nature of the sources, the evidence for Blackbourn is suggestive of an increase between 1086 and the late thirteenth century, and a definite shift towards the use of windmills.

The Hundred Rolls show that having a mill was not necessarily an exclusive lordly perquisite by 1279-80. In Bunsty, Geoffrey Miller held Haversham mill and Alice Miller held the mill in Little Linford for life.²⁷² Roger Crok held a free half-virgate and a quarter-virgate in villeinage in North Stoke, Langtree, and he also held the mill; William de Wyk held a half-virgate in Crowmarsh Gifford but also held the two mills

²⁶⁹ Fractional mills imply they were shared between different manors. When multiple mills are listed, there were probably multiple mill wheels within the same building, rather than several mill buildings in one place. See Langdon, 'Water-Mills and Windmills', 433-4.

²⁷⁰ Gransden, *Bury*, 300-2.

²⁷¹ Gransden, *Bury*, 301.

²⁷² *RH*, ii, 346a-b.

there.²⁷³ In fact, in Bunsty and Langtree where one would expect lordship to have been more pervasive because manorial fragmentation was less advanced, lords seem to have been less concerned to keep mills in demesne. Most of the recorded mills in Blackbourn were either held by the abbot or the ‘chief lord’ of the vill, though there were some exceptions to this. Of course, this could just indicate that seigneurial mills were more likely to be recorded, and Bailey has suggested that in Suffolk as a whole, demesne mills held by the lord were relatively rare.²⁷⁴ Nonetheless, even when leased out to tenants, mills provided the lord with an income.²⁷⁵

The importance that lords placed on mills can be illustrated by an event recorded in Jocelin of Brakelond’s chronicle. During Samson’s abbacy (1182-1211), Herbert the dean built a windmill at Haberdun in Bury. When Abbot Samson heard this, he ordered the sacrist to send his carpenters to the mill to pull it down. Herbert argued that he had every right to build a mill on his free land, and that ‘the benefit of the wind should not be denied to anyone.’ Samson claimed that it would affect the profits of Bury’s mills, but his main concern was with jurisdiction. The abbot of St Edmunds had extensive rights in the town of Bury. Jocelin had Samson retort: ‘neither the king nor the justiciar can change or build anything within the *banleuca* without the assent of the abbot and convent. Why have you presumed to do such a thing?’²⁷⁶ The *banleuca* was a special case, but this still suggests that a lord may have viewed the building of a new mill as an incursion upon his lordship and the mill’s physical presence as a visual reminder that he had been undermined.

²⁷³ *RH*, ii, 774b, 781a.

²⁷⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 57.

²⁷⁵ Creighton, *Designs*, 56-7; Gransden, *Bury*, 303-5, 312-3; Dyer, *Making*, 131-2.

²⁷⁶ Gransden, *Bury*, 299-300.

Fold-courses

Fold-soke was a common perquisite in Blackbourn. Land was divided into fold-courses which contained open-fields and pasture; flocks grazed on the pasture, but were 'folded' on the fallows at night to manure the fields and maintain soil fertility. A man subject to foldsoke, or 'belonging to the fold' was obliged to take his animals, principally sheep, to manure the lord's land.²⁷⁷ Some have argued that fold-courses were oppressive, but others have pointed out that they could be mutually beneficial, as they guaranteed that sheep received adequate grazing.²⁷⁸ Moreover, in the thirteenth century and earlier in the Breckland region, where half of Blackbourn was situated, fold-courses were not a seigneurial monopoly.²⁷⁹ The light, sandy soils of the Breckland region were infertile and better suited to pastoral rather than arable farming. The grant of folds to peasant tenants was driven by the fact that pastoral farming was a regional specialism, and that there were large expanses of pasture to be exploited. Eking a profit from the arable would have been difficult and regular tathing was required to maintain yields. If lords had restricted folding to their own lands, their tenants' crops would have failed and their rents and dues would have gone unpaid.²⁸⁰

However, grants of fold-courses tended to be limited to certain groups of peasants. Six Domesday entries record that men in Blackbourn/Bradmere were subject to their lord's fold. In St Edmunds' fee, twenty-one sokemen in Ingham, sixty sokemen in Stanton, twenty-two sokemen in Rickinghall Inferior, six free men in Barnham and thirteen of the fourteen free men in Stowlangtoft belonged to the abbot's fold. Seven of Peter de

²⁷⁷ N. Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 2009), 97. Also see: Postgate, 'Field Systems of East Anglia', 313-8; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 105-6; M. Bailey, 'Sand into Gold: the Evolution of the Foldcourse System in West Suffolk, 1200-1600', *AgHR*, 38, 1 (1990), 40-57; Bailey, *Marginal*, 65-7; Douglas, *East Anglia*, 78.

²⁷⁸ A. Simpson, 'The East Anglian Foldcourse: Some Queries', *AgHR*, 6, 2 (1958), 90; Postgate, 'Field systems of East Anglia', 313-5.

²⁷⁹ Bailey, *Marginal*, 72-3; Bailey, 'Sand into Gold', 44-6.

²⁸⁰ Bailey, *Marginal*, 72-83.

Valognes's eight free men in Rushford also belonged to the fold.²⁸¹ These men accounted for just 5 percent of the free men in the double-hundred, but 56 percent of the sokemen. Sokemen were generally 'less free' than free men. The twenty-one sokemen in Ingham owed St Edmunds sake and soke and all customary dues and they could not sell their land. The sixty sokemen in Stanton and twenty-two sokemen in Rickinghall were bound in all these ways but were also commended to the abbot, emphasising that foldsoke tended to accompany already intensive lordship. This was also true in the late twelfth-century *Kalendar*. Certain men in Stanton were freer (*liberiores*) than the other sokemen; one of the factors that contributed to this freedom was the right to have their own folds.²⁸²

As well as ensuring that their own lands were well manured and asserting control over their tenants, fold-courses could be a source of revenue for lords. Some tenants were prepared to pay for freedom from the lord's fold.²⁸³ Manorial court rolls record that Wyot Golding, a tenant of St Edmunds in Rickinghall Inferior, had to pay 12*d* in 1267 for keeping his sheep outside the lord's fold without permission.²⁸⁴ Labour services could include helping to carry the lord's fold. Geoffrey the reeve had to perform this duty three times a year in Bardwell in the late thirteenth century.²⁸⁵ Manorial court rolls record peasants being fined for not moving the fold when they were supposed to.²⁸⁶ Lords must have deemed the process worthwhile, as they provided stipends for those involved in maintaining the folds. The 1328 Rickinghall account roll records that St Edmunds paid out 8*s* 4*d* for this purpose.²⁸⁷

²⁸¹ LDB 363-365, 366v, 421 (Suffolk, 14,69; 72; 75; 77; 89; 37,6).

²⁸² *Kalendar*, 38-9.

²⁸³ Postgate, 'Field Systems of East Anglia', 315-7.

²⁸⁴ BL Add MS 40063, f8.

²⁸⁵ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 56.

²⁸⁶ For example in Rickinghall: BL Add MS 40063, f7-7v.

²⁸⁷ BL Add Roll 63440.

Fold-courses may not have been as restrictive in parts of Blackbourn as they were elsewhere, but the lord still retained ultimate control over the number of courses. Freedom from the fold was deemed an important right to preserve, emphasised by the insistence in Rushford and Stowlangtoft in Domesday that one of the free men did not belong to the fold, and that certain of the ‘freer’ men in Stanton in the *Kalendar* could have their own folds, unlike their neighbours. Clearly these individuals wanted their freedom from such seigneurial restrictions on record.

Rights of Warren

Legal rights of free warren should be distinguished from rabbit warrens, but both were perquisites of lordship. In the extensive royal forest, hunting rights belonged exclusively to the king;²⁸⁸ outside of the royal forest, the king was prepared to grant free warren to lords of manors. This privilege provided them with the sole right to hunt the beasts of the warren.²⁸⁹ These included hares, rabbits, pheasants, partridges and other small game.²⁹⁰ This right was important symbolically and economically. Grants of free warren theoretically prevented the local peasantry from small-scale hunting. It reinforced the notion of meat being a high status food, encouraging a social divide.²⁹¹ Moreover, it enabled even relatively unimportant manorial lords to aspire to higher status activities like hunting.

²⁸⁸ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 22-3.

²⁸⁹ M. Bailey, ‘The Rabbit and the Medieval East Anglian Economy’, *AgHR*, 36 (1987), 2; Creighton, *Designs*, 112.

²⁹⁰ Creighton, *Designs*, 112.

²⁹¹ M. Müller, ‘Food, Hierarchy, and Class Conflict’ in *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer*, eds. R. Goddard, J. Langdon, M. Müller (Turnhout, 2010), 231-5; T. Reuter, ‘Nobles and Others: The Social and Cultural Expression of Power Relations in the Middle Ages’ in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. A. Duggan (Woodbridge, 2000), 90-1.

Free warren was one of the most common lordly privileges by the thirteenth century, with the number of grants peaking in the 1250s.²⁹² From great lords like Isabella de Fortibus, countess of Aumale and Devon and lady of the Isle of Wight, to Hugh Druval who just held one manor at Goring, Langtree, medieval lords claimed rights of warren. Numerous records of these grants survive from the thirteenth century, but it is unclear whether this marks their inception or just the survival of more records. In the late thirteenth century, some lords claimed free warren by ancient right, implying that the system was well-established.²⁹³ Clearly it was a sought after privilege. Nicholas of Haversham paid the king £5 for rights of free warren at Haversham, Bunsty, in 1233.²⁹⁴ Peter of Goldington paid 10 marks in 1251 for having free warren at Stoke Goldington (Bunsty) and Cotes.²⁹⁵ These rights were particularly important for new lords attempting to establish their credentials. Three men in the king's administration built up holdings in Bunsty in the thirteenth century, and each received grants of free warren shortly afterwards.²⁹⁶

It is easy to see why these grants were popular from the king's perspective, as it was a way of granting privilege without depleting the royal demesne. The grant to Peter Chaceporc of free warren for his manor of Ravenstone, Bunsty, in 1253 specified that it excluded any lands within the king's forest.²⁹⁷ These grants depleted the resources of the local population, but the king's rights were safeguarded. They could also act as patronage by overlords. John Marmion received free warren from Henry III for his

²⁹² D. Crook, 'The 'Petition of the Barons' and Charters of Free Warren', *Thirteenth-Century England*, viii (2001), 36-43.

²⁹³ For example: Isabella de Valognes at Great Fakenham, Blackbourn: *RH*, ii, 198b.

²⁹⁴ *CChR*, 1226-1257, 174; *CFR*, 1232-3, 86.

²⁹⁵ *CChR*, 1226-1257, 351; *CFR*, 1250-1, 196.

²⁹⁶ Paul Pever in Lavendon in 1249; Peter Chaceporc in Ravenstone in 1253; and Henry of Norwich in Lavendon and Brayfield in 1269. *CChR*, 1226-1257, 341, 431; 1257-1300, 123. For the importance of such rights to lesser lords, see Bailey, *Suffolk*, 15-6.

²⁹⁷ *CChR*, 1226-1257, 431.

Langtree lands in 1258 at the instigation of his overlord Philip Marmion.²⁹⁸ By contrast, Edmund of Pakenham retained rights of warren over his younger brother Thomas's manor of Ixworth Thorpe, Blackbourn, meaning that Thomas did not even have the basic lordly privilege of hunting small game on his own manor.²⁹⁹

The exclusivity associated with grants of free warren was probably difficult to enforce. The boundaries of grants would not always be clear, particularly in regions with overlap of manors. It may have been this, as much as predatory lordship, that saw Isabella de Valognes exceed the boundaries of her rights by half a league, into the vill of Bardwell in Blackbourn.³⁰⁰ Blackbourn was characterised by small manors that did not follow vill boundaries, and it must have been difficult to assert exclusive lordly rights where landholding and jurisdiction overlapped to such an extent. This was not only a problem in regions with fragmented manors however. Isabella de Fortibus also overreached the boundaries of her rights of warren in Whitchurch, Langtree, despite most manors coinciding with vill boundaries in that hundred.³⁰¹

Actual rabbit warrens could also be associated with grants of free warren. Rabbits were introduced from the continent in the generations after the Conquest. They did not initially adapt well to the climate, so they had to be carefully looked after, often in specially created warrens.³⁰² Rabbit warrens were particularly prominent in East Anglia. In Blackbourn, there are known to have been medieval rabbit warrens at Coney Weston, Thelnetham, Great Fakenham and Culford at least.³⁰³ Heathland, which was common in

²⁹⁸ *CChR*, 1257-1300, 5; *Boarstall*, 37.

²⁹⁹ *Pakenham*, 4.

³⁰⁰ *RH*, ii, 153b.

³⁰¹ TNA JUST1/705, m4d.

³⁰² Creighton, *Designs*, 110; Bailey, 'The Rabbit', 2.

³⁰³ Bailey, 'The Rabbit', 1-20; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 96; Dymond (ed.), *Atlas*, 68-9.

Blackbourn, provided good grazing.³⁰⁴ The commercialisation of the economy of the Breckland region and the growth in markets and trade routes accelerated during the thirteenth century, and by the early fourteenth century the Brecklands were distinctive sheep and rabbit farming country.³⁰⁵

Unlike sheep farming however, rabbit farming remained the preserve of elites until a later date, so ownership of a warren was a sign of status, as well as a source of food and income.³⁰⁶ The benefits were not exclusively seigneurial, as they provided opportunities for employment, either in year-round roles like warrener or in various seasonal roles.³⁰⁷ Moreover, it is likely that local people took advantage of opportunities to poach rabbits to supplement their diets or to sell.³⁰⁸ However, rabbits could be pests, and they ate and damaged peasants' crops.³⁰⁹ This was doubly significant, because lords issued fines if their crops were damaged by peasants' livestock, but peasants had no right to cull the rabbits to limit damage to their own crops.

Deer Parks

The social status of venison and hunting generated a demand for the creation of seigneurial deer parks, where deer could be hunted by the elites.³¹⁰ Creighton has argued that parks cannot have been viewed as economic enterprises, because they were

³⁰⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 96.

³⁰⁵ Bailey, *Marginal*, 145.

³⁰⁶ Creighton, *Designs*, 111.

³⁰⁷ Bailey, *Marginal*, 185.

³⁰⁸ However, Dyer has argued that a lack of game bones excavated from village sites suggests that peasants had little opportunity for hunting: C. Dyer, 'The material world of English peasants, 1200-1540: archaeological perspectives on rural economy and welfare', *AgHR*, 62, 1 (2014), 7.

³⁰⁹ Müller, 'Food Hierarchy', 244-5; Whyte, *Inhabiting*, 91-2.

³¹⁰ Creighton, *Designs*, 122-66; M. Bailey, 'The English Landscape' in *The Manchester Illustrated History of Late Medieval England*, ed. C. Given-Wilson (Manchester, 1996), 28; O. Rackham, 'Forest and Upland' in *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, eds. J. Crick & E. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), 50-1; J. Birrell, 'Deer and Deer Farming in Medieval England', *AgHR*, 40, 2 (1992), 112.

too expensive to set up and maintain.³¹¹ However, Cantor and Hatherly argued that economic needs could be important and parks could bring in substantial profits.³¹² They were generally heavily wooded, but also contained meadow and pasture.³¹³ Deer were important, but parks also provided grazing for other animals and they were popular places for rabbit warrens.³¹⁴

Deer parks were not an innovation brought over by the Conqueror as previously thought, and there were some Anglo-Saxon precedents. Nonetheless, they only existed in any great numbers from the twelfth century onwards, reaching their heyday in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.³¹⁵ In the case study hundreds they were most common in the two hundreds containing woodland, Bunsty and Langtree, but there was also a park at Ixworth, Blackbourn, as early as 1086, and later parks at Euston and Hopton in the same hundred.³¹⁶ Parks were particularly common in Bunsty hundred, as they were in Buckinghamshire more generally.³¹⁷ It is difficult to know how many existed at any one time however;³¹⁸ it seems unlikely that licences to impark were always required, so parks are often only mentioned in passing.³¹⁹ Licences may have been more necessary in Bunsty than in Langtree, because Salcey forest was part of the

³¹¹ Creighton, *Designs*, 124; see also: L.M. Cantor and J. Hatherly, 'The Medieval Parks of England', *Geography*, 64, 2 (1979), 76; I.M.W. Harvey, 'Poaching and sedition in fifteenth-century England' in *Lordship and Learning: Studies in Memory of Trevor Aston*, ed. R. Evans (Woodbridge, 2000), 170.

³¹² Cantor and Hatherly, 'Medieval Parks', 80.

³¹³ M. Reed, *The Buckinghamshire Landscape* (Sevenoaks, 1979), 129-31.

³¹⁴ Creighton, *Designs*, 111.

³¹⁵ L.M. Cantor, 'Forests, Chases, Parks and Warrens' in *The English Medieval Landscape*, ed. L. Cantor (London, 1982), 76-7; Creighton, *Designs*, 125-6; Williamson, *Environment*, 213.

³¹⁶ LDB 438v (Suffolk, 66,1); Dymond (ed.), *Atlas*, 66-7.

³¹⁷ Cantor and Hatherly, 'Medieval Parks', 74-5.

³¹⁸ In Bunsty hundred in the thirteenth century there were definitely parks at: Lavendon and Snelson (Lavendon), *RH*, ii, 38a; Tathall End (Hanslope) and Hanslope, *RH*, ii, 38a; *CCR*, 1272-1279, 204; *CPR*, 1292-1301, 622; Ernesden (Lathbury), *CChR*, 1226-1257, 97, 465; *RH*, ii, 38a; Gayhurst, Le Ho and Bunsty (Gayhurst), *CFR*, 1228-9, 324; *RH*, ii, 38a; Eakley, *FoF Buckinghamshire*, i, 60, 69; *RH*, ii, 38a; Little Linford, TNA C133/106/8; *CPR*, 1281-1292, 103; and Haversham, *FoF Buckinghamshire*, i, 32. Olney Park existed by the fourteenth century at the latest, *VCH Buckinghamshire*, iv, 432. In Langtree there were definitely parks at Appelhanger (Goring), *Sutton*, iv, 167; Whitchurch, *Boarstall*, 183; *RH*, ii, 775b; Mapledurham, *RH*, ii, 42b.

³¹⁹ Cantor and Hatherly, 'Medieval Parks', 73.

royal forest, whilst the woodlands in the Oxfordshire Chilterns were never part of the royal forest.³²⁰

Apart from being associated with elites and elite consumption, the deer parks placed restrictions upon the local population.³²¹ The peak in imparkment occurred in the late thirteenth century, when land was in high demand, which would have sent a message to the wider community.³²² The establishment of a deer park could disrupt existing settlements, communication routes and rights of common, causing inconvenience and hardship for the local peasantry. It could also impact upon neighbouring lords and encourage local rivalries.³²³

There is little direct evidence of attitudes to deer parks, but as they restricted the local population, it seems likely that they were resented. Many parks are first recorded when they were broken into, suggesting that people did not respect these lordly enclosures. Some would have stolen out of necessity, but many poachers were not poor and starving; the number of instances of poaching or sabotage by other elites should not be underestimated.³²⁴ In 1255, Nicholas of Mongewell took responsibility for his man John de Cancia who had broken into Roger of Clifford's park at Mapledurham, possibly suggesting that he had encouraged this incursion.³²⁵ In 1294 William Loveday's park at Applehanger in Goring, Langtree was broken into, and the wild animals enclosed there

³²⁰ Preece, 'Medieval Woods', 45.

³²¹ Creighton, *Designs*, 124.

³²² Creighton, *Designs*, 128; Bailey, 'Landscape', 28.

³²³ Creighton, *Designs*, 153-4; Harvey, 'Poaching and Sedition', 172-3.

³²⁴ Creighton, *Designs*, 160-2. For discussion of similar tendencies with regard to poaching in the royal forests and trespassing in warrens see: J. Birrell, 'Who poached the king's deer? A study in thirteenth-century crime', *Midland History*, 7 (1982), 9-25; Crook, 'Free Warren', 41.

³²⁵ *RH*, ii, 42b.

were injured. The record does not state that anything was stolen, suggesting that this was an act of vandalism rather than the actions of starving peasants.³²⁶

Walter of Huntercombe was lord of Newnham Murren in Langtree, but he was regularly absent from his southern lands on the king's service, and fought on campaigns in Wales and Scotland. Walter's prolonged absences meant trouble for his southern lands, and in 1304 he complained that people had ravaged his park at Huntercombe, which was contiguous to Langtree, in his absence.³²⁷ As well as hunting Huntercombe's deer, the intruders had also injured his men and killed some of his horses, so again there seems to be more to this than simply hunting for food. This was not the only problem caused by Walter's prolonged absences, as in 1300 he claimed that men had broken into his house at Wrestlingworth, Bedfordshire, and stolen his goods whilst he was in Scotland.³²⁸ This suggests that the absence of a lord could directly impact upon the security of their lands.

Conclusion

These perquisites of lordship came down to control of space and people. The high status of many lords and their superior assets would have meant that they naturally exerted greater power over the landscape and its resources. These rights codified and extended that power. All of these features increased in numbers across this period, meaning that a greater proportion of the population were restricted by their lords' claims upon the landscape. This coincides with Crouch's chronology of social stratification, with men lower down the social scale aspiring to these rights as markers of elite status.³²⁹ The effects of this increase were compounded by the increase in population and the

³²⁶ Sutton, iv, 167.

³²⁷ CPR, 1301-1307, 278.

³²⁸ CPR, 1292-1301, 549.

³²⁹ Crouch, *English*, xv-xvi, 18-20; Crouch, *Image*, 136-9. See also, Dyer, *Making*, 147-8; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 15-6.

fragmentation of manors that meant there were a greater number of manorial lords laying claim to these perquisites. At the very time when land was scarce and a huge proportion of the population were living on the edge of subsistence, lords were increasing their claims to the landscape, directly impacting upon the productivity and resources of the rest of the population.

It is of course possible to view all of these buildings and other perquisites as purely practical. It was possible for tenants to hold mills and sometimes even build their own, and lords were prepared to grant away their rights of patronage over churches, suggesting that they did not jealously protect these rights. Abbot Samson's reaction to the building of an unauthorised mill in Bury argues against this however, as does the competition between the lords of Swaffham Prior in the twelfth century, each determined to assert the primacy of their own church. Each of these examples could be dismissed as financial concerns, but the impressive, innovative design of St Mary's church in Swaffham Prior suggests that the lord was asserting his status.

The value placed upon different seigneurial rights varied across the case studies as the landscapes in each were better suited to different types of exploitation.³³⁰ Deer parks were more common in the wooded areas of Langtree and Bunsty, whilst warrens and fold-courses were more typical in Blackbourn. The lordly claims to these resources reinforced divides of status and wealth: they created physical divides of space by designating areas that peasants were either obliged to use or restricted from; they reinforced divides in diet by cultivating foods like venison and rabbit for high status consumption and preventing others from hunting wild game; and they restricted freedom of movement in the local countryside.

³³⁰ Cantor, 'Forests', 80-1.

It is impossible to know whether the population consciously recognised these features as symbols of lordship. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* associated castles with oppression, but this does not prove that the rest of the population viewed them in the same way. Though separated in time from this study by a century in which there was extreme social and economic change, the demands voiced during the peasants' revolt of 1381 may be instructive. According to Henry Knighton, Wat Tyler demanded 'that all game, whether in waters or in parks and woods, should become common to all'.³³¹ Thomas Walsingham stated that the villeins of St Albans wanted to be able to freely pasture their animals, have rights of fishing and hunting and be able to use handmills.³³² When the men of St Albans acted out in defiance, they tore down enclosures around woods.³³³ During a previous dispute, handmills had been confiscated from the inhabitants and used by Abbot Richard to pave the entrance to his parlour. The rebels of 1381 tore up these millstones and broke them into pieces.³³⁴ These actions represent more than mere vandalism, and instead show real frustration at the control lords had over the landscape and the restrictions this placed on the inhabitants. Land continued to be assarted for arable across this period, but it was outpaced by population growth,³³⁵ creating fierce competition between peasants and lords alike. The increasing creation of lordly spaces such as the grounds around their dwellings and deer parks and enclosures suggests that it was a battle won by the lords at the expense of the rest of the population.

³³¹ Knighton, 218-9.

³³² Walsingham, 442-3.

³³³ Walsingham, 446-9.

³³⁴ Walsingham, 456-9; Gransden, *Bury*, 313.

³³⁵ M.M. Postan, 'Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime: England' in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe: volume I* (Cambridge, 1966), 248-52; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 28-41, 45, 53-63.

1.5 Conclusion

It is incredibly difficult to characterise lords as a group. It has been shown that across all case studies, at all three points considered, there was great variety in status and wealth which would have impacted upon how they exercised their lordship. Even if there was continuity in tenure, it is not certain that the lords would have had the same priorities at all points. Grants of office, marriages, divided inheritance, debts and royal favour could alter the status and outlook of a family. Personal policies were also influenced by changes which were more generally felt: Henry II's legal reforms and the increasing role of the knight in royal government; periods of rebellion, particularly in Stephen's, John's and Henry III's reigns; and warfare, as many of the manorial lords were expected to serve or pay scutage.

The Norman Conquest had a huge impact across all levels of society: all three hundreds were deeply affected. Not only were the lords themselves replaced, but landholding structures were altered, and often the men and women holding were of different statuses and would have had different priorities. Though the tenurial impact of the Conquest should not be underestimated, a note of caution should be sounded with regards to some of the other changes traditionally attributed to the Conquest. Castles were built by the Conqueror as a means to secure his position, but in the three case studies most were built from the twelfth century onwards. Few churches in the case studies can be attributed to the immediate post-Conquest period. Similarly, deer parks and rabbit warrens have often been associated with the Normans, but they were only constructed in any great numbers several generations after 1066. Nonetheless, the possibility that the Conquest initiated these trends, which then went onto proliferate across the twelfth century should not be dismissed.

The following two centuries saw extensive changes in lordship and society more generally, that have inevitably been underplayed because of the focus on Domesday and the Hundred Rolls and the static pictures they present. There was not a simple linear development from 1066-1280; there were fluctuations in lordly power and fashions, influenced by national concerns as much as personal fortunes. In Bunsty, one of the most dramatic shifts across these two hundred years occurred shortly after Domesday was compiled, when Robert de Mowbray, nephew of Geoffrey of Coutances, lost his uncle's extensive Bunsty estates following his rebellion in 1095.³³⁶ Even when the cause of change was more routine, such as failure to provide a male heir, the ensuing changes could dramatically alter landholding structures.

Trends can be identified, such as extensive subinfeudation and fragmentation of manors. This was caused partially by lords granting land to religious houses or cadet branches or lands being divided through female inheritance, but it is also a symptom of the increasingly intense pressure on landholding at all levels of society caused by the increase in population. Even in Langtree where most manors did not fragment, some of these pressures can be observed. The Druvals held Goring, and though they did not create any submanors, they had enfeoffed a cadet branch with a hide of land for nominal rents, and three religious houses held two hides and seven virgates in free alms, meaning that their demesne land and rental income was much reduced.³³⁷ In 1086 Miles Crispin had held all of his Langtree lands in demesne, but by 1279-80, Edmund earl of Cornwall had no direct tenurial interest in the hundred. The subinfeudation of these lands progressed swiftly across the late eleventh and early twelfth century: a c.1154 list

³³⁶ W.M. Aird, 'Mowbray, Robert de, earl of Northumberland, (d. 1115/1125)', *ODNB*; Hollister, 'Magnates and "Curiales"', 67-8.

³³⁷ *RH*, ii, 777b-778a. Dyer suggested that provision for family members often pulled small lords into debt: Dyer, *Making*, 148-9.

of knights' fees shows extensive subinfeudation on the Wallingford honour by this date.³³⁸

By the late thirteenth century, more men of lower status were holding manors, but this was not entirely new. Men like Hugh de Bolbec were substantial lords in their own right, but others of the Domesday subtenants would have had localised concerns. Small manors, as well as being created by fragmentation, could also be formed by the accumulation of lands by enterprising free men, and their subsequent leasing to other tenants. This seems particularly likely in parts of Blackbourn, where many free men had tenants of their own, and it is difficult to distinguish substantial peasants and small manorial lords. As will be shown below, men were drawn from both of these groups to fulfil the same administrative roles. This blurring of status may in fact have served to heighten awareness of social difference, as men strove to differentiate themselves from their social inferiors.³³⁹ Though fewer families were taking up the expenses and obligations of knighthood from the thirteenth century, this did not prevent them from aspiring to other trappings of wealth and status;³⁴⁰ many of the lords in these case studies that lacked knightly status, still laid claim to other lordly perquisites like parks and rights of warren, and lived in houses that were superior to those of their peasant neighbours.

The types of lordship explored in this chapter essentially involved the appropriation of space and resources and the exploitation of the peasantry.³⁴¹ The Norman Conquest

³³⁸ For example, the Bassets, Pippards, Druvals and Chauseys were already holding from Wallingford by this date: *RBE*, 308-11. For the date of the list see: Tilley, 'Wallingford', 95.

³³⁹ Crouch, *English*, xv-xvi.

³⁴⁰ Faulkner, 'Transformation of Knighthood', 1-23; Coss, *Origins*, 66, 71-4, 94-8; Dyer, *Standards*, 278-83.

³⁴¹ Dyer, *Standards*, 6-7.

initiated a dramatic increase in the pressure on local society, as the incoming lords appropriated holdings and added free men and sokemen to their manors, staking a greater claim to landholding and lordship than their predecessors. The fragmentation and subinfeudation of manors meant that there were more manorial lords in England in the late thirteenth century than there had been in the eleventh, so there were more men and women appropriating resources for their exclusive use through grants of free warren and enclosure of parks. These trends developed across precisely the same period when population pressure was also reducing the amount of land at the disposal of the peasantry. Exactly how this impacted on the different ranks of the peasantry, and their economic, legal and social status, is the subject of the next chapter.

2 The Peasantry

In his study of the English peasantry and taxation, Maddicott acknowledged that the ‘frequent use of the term “peasant” is itself a confession of weakness, disguising the fact that the precise economic and social status of the tax-payer is usually indeterminable.’³⁴² Nonetheless, as a general term that can encompass the majority of the population it is impossible to avoid.³⁴³ Hilton argued for five essential elements in his definition of the peasantry: (i) possession of the means of agricultural production by which they subsist; (ii) working holdings essentially as a family unit; (iii) association with larger units like villages or hamlets; (iv) including agricultural labourers, artisans etc. as they are from the same ranks; (v) supporting ‘super-imposed classes and institutions’ like landlords, church, state and towns by producing surplus goods.³⁴⁴ More recently, it has been accepted that the peasantry also had an involvement in the market, both as producers and as consumers, rather than subsisting entirely from their own holdings.³⁴⁵

The biggest problem is where to draw the cut-off line between the upper ranks of the peasantry and the lower ranks of lords. Some men and women held substantial lands that should preclude their categorisation as peasants.³⁴⁶ However, setting a specific limit in terms of arable holdings above which the term should not apply is too arbitrary.³⁴⁷

Differences in the quality of land, type of farming practiced and rents owed would

³⁴² J.R. Maddicott, ‘The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown 1294-1341’, *P&P*, supplement 1 (1975), 68.

³⁴³ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 36.

³⁴⁴ R.H. Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975), 13. Hilton, *Bond Men*, 25, 35-6. Dyer would exclude those entirely dependent on wages, but noted that *most* wage earners would fall into the category because they would also rely on landholding. Dyer, *Standards*, 22-3; Dyer, *Making*, 8.

³⁴⁵ C. Dyer, ‘Did peasants need markets and towns? The experience of late medieval England’ in *London and Beyond: Essays in Honour of Derek Keene*, eds. M. Davies and J. Galloway (London, 2012), 25-47; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 36-7.

³⁴⁶ Dyer suggests peasants usually held less than 60 or 80 acres: Dyer, *Standards*, 22-3; Dyer, *Making*, 8. See also: Postan, ‘England’, 628-9.

³⁴⁷ Schofield, *Peasant*, 6-7.

affect potential income meaning that two men with the same amount of land could appear different in terms of status. Moreover, surveys give landholding a sense of permanence which it lacked in reality. Studies of the peasant land market have shown that land was regularly changing hands, either permanently or in the form of short-term leases.³⁴⁸ The acquisition of more lands may have increased the economic status of a family, but depending upon the amount of land and the permanence of the tenure, it is debateable whether it immediately elevated them above peasant status altogether. Similarly, when a member of the local elite suffered a reduction in status or a younger son just received the equivalent of a peasant holding, it is questionable whether they would have been instantly perceived – or would have perceived themselves – as equivalent to the rest of the local population.³⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this study relies on documents that do not provide enough information to categorise the socio-economic status of all individuals in any more than a general way. Besides, the line between the lesser lords and the upper peasantry would have been blurred, so it is inappropriate to attempt to draw it too sharply here. Therefore, though at times it is unsatisfactory, the term ‘peasant’ will be used in a broad sense, but the more neutral term ‘tenant’ will also be used.³⁵⁰

Problems of definition are heightened by the extent of change across the two centuries under discussion. The peasantry’s legal status has been one of the main historiographical focuses for this period. Freedom and unfreedom are not and were not absolute concepts, and their meanings have shifted over time. Two distinct types of

³⁴⁸ For example: M. Mate, ‘The East Sussex Land Market and Agrarian Class Structure in the Late Middle Ages’, *P&P*, 139 (May, 1993), 46-65; P.D.A. Harvey, ‘The Peasant Land Market in Medieval England – and Beyond’ in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford, 1996), 392-407; Schofield, ‘Dearth, Debt’, 1-17.

³⁴⁹ Though Saul pointed out that ‘a poor nobleman’ was an oxymoron in medieval England, and those of gentle origin who lacked wealth would have slipped out of the elite: Saul, ‘Gentry and the Parish’, 245.

³⁵⁰ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 36-7.

legal unfreedom were experienced during this period: slavery and serfdom. Seebohm argued that from the early Anglo-Saxon period through to the later medieval period, society progressed from slavery to freedom, via serfdom. He argued that the use of the same terms in Domesday Book and in later surveys means that these men held similar holdings by similar terms at both points: a *villanus* in 1086 held in unfree villeinage, just like a *villanus* in the thirteenth century.³⁵¹ By contrast, Maitland argued that terms like *villani* and *servi* meant different things in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and the evidence presented here supports this view. Followed by Vinogradoff and Stenton, Maitland felt that the period after the Conquest saw a shift whereby men who had been legally free drifted towards the unfree state that was so widespread by the late twelfth century.³⁵²

The same Latin term – *servi* – was used to designate slaves and serfs, and legal treatises like Bracton drew upon the framework and principles of Roman slavery in their discussions of serfdom.³⁵³ Because the same terms were used, it is not always clear whether slavery or serfdom was meant, and there has been some debate as to whether the Domesday *servi* should be considered slaves or serfs. Maitland used both ‘serf’ and ‘slave’ as translations of this term.³⁵⁴ More recently, translating *servus* as serf in an eleventh-century English context has been met with virulent criticism,³⁵⁵ and the use of the term slave has been generally accepted in the historiography.³⁵⁶ However, by the

³⁵¹ F. Seebohm, *The English Village Community* (London, 1905), 90-1.

³⁵² *DBB*, 28-30; P. Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England: Essays in English Mediaeval History* (London, 1927), 129-37; Stenton, *ASE*, 470. More recently, Faith has argued that the free peasantry made up a significant proportion of the Domesday population, but acknowledged that many were at least heavily dependent: Faith, *Peasantry*, 57-9.

³⁵³ For example: Bracton, ii, 29-32; Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 47-8, 59-60.

³⁵⁴ *DBB*, 26-36.

³⁵⁵ H.B. Clarke, ‘Domesday Slavery (Adjusted for Slaves)’, *Midland History*, 1, 4 (1972), 37-46, 42. D.A.E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England: From the Reign of Alfred until the twelfth century* (Woodbridge, 1995), 194.

³⁵⁶ For example: Pelteret, *Slavery*; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 126. Darby used ‘serf’ in the regional editions of his *Domesday Geography*, but changed to ‘slave’ in *Domesday England*. However, in

thirteenth century, *servi* was used to designate serfs. There remained some distinction between the terms *servi* and *villani*, with *servi* implying more personal unfreedom and *villani* tenurial unfreedom, but in reality they were practically interchangeable, and serf and villein are generally used interchangeably by historians in a thirteenth-century context.³⁵⁷ However, in Domesday there was a clear distinction between *servi* and *villani*, and *villani* does not seem to have had the same connotations of legal unfreedom that it had by the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The differences between slavery and serfdom were not always clear cut, but some distinctions can be drawn.³⁵⁸ Slaves were viewed as chattels rather than people; they could be put to work, bought and sold as their owner saw fit, and there is no evidence that a wergild was paid to a slave's family to compensate for his death.³⁵⁹ They provided a permanent workforce, but they also required economic investment from the lord, who generally had to provide accommodation and food and oversee their work.³⁶⁰ By contrast, serfs were generally granted land by lords, from which they had to produce their own food and income. In return they owed their lords rents in cash and kind and labour services in varying proportions. In thirteenth-century England holding land in unfree villeinage involved a package of other responsibilities and payments that varied from manor to manor.³⁶¹ These included merchet, paid to the lord on the marriage of an

a recent talk Hyams re-opened the debate, questioning whether the Domesday *servi* were slaves: P. Hyams, 'Slave and Serf Before the Twelfth Century'; paper given at the Institute of Historical Research, London, on 13/03/14.

³⁵⁷ Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 77; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-7; Bailey, *English Manor*, 28-35. The overlap between unfree status and villein tenure declined from c.1350, however: M. Bailey, *The Decline of Serfdom in Late Medieval England: From Bondage to Freedom* (Woodbridge, 2014), 56-8.

³⁵⁸ For a comparison of slavery and serfdom across time see: S.L. Engerman, 'Slavery, serfdom and other forms of coerced labour: similarities and differences' in *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. M.L. Bush (London, 1996), 18-41.

³⁵⁹ OHLE, 214; Faith, *Peasantry*, 62

³⁶⁰ Faith, *Peasantry*, 64-5.

³⁶¹ For a discussion of servile incidents, their origins, prevalence and subsequent decline see: Bailey, *Serfdom*, 37-61, 92-3.

unfree woman, and occasionally also owed by unfree men.³⁶² Unfree women could also be fined for having sex or bearing a child out of wedlock (leyrwite or childwite). Villeins had to seek permission from their lord to leave the manor, and generally pay a fee for the right to do so, and a heriot of the best beast was owed upon the death of a villein tenant. The lord had a right to tallage his villeins at will, but in practice the regularity and extent of the burden often became fixed by custom.³⁶³ Serfs could not sue or be sued in the king's courts. Like slaves, serfs were theoretically their lord's chattels, and they could not own or inherit property. However, in reality, villein land came to be heritable, and villeins did accumulate more land and own chattels. Moreover, the extent to which merchet and other incidents of villeinage were enforced varied, as did the relative burden of labour services and rents.³⁶⁴

Arguably, the distinction between slaves and the rest of the peasantry was already blurred in eleventh-century England. Some of the Domesday peasantry were already highly dependent on lords and bound by various customs to their land and position in society.³⁶⁵ Some of the slaves had been granted their own smallholdings to farm, and many free peasants and slaves took on similar work roles.³⁶⁶ Hudson has argued that lords had 'particularly extensive control' over their slaves' time, labour and possessions, and that a slave's hold upon his land was weaker than that of a free man.³⁶⁷ In reality, the distinction between a slave and the lowest of the other peasantry may not have

³⁶² Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 153-6; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 37-40.

³⁶³ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-7; C. Dyer, 'Memories of freedom: attitudes towards serfdom in England, 1200-1350' in *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. M.L. Bush (London, 1996), 278; Bailey, *English Manor*, 28-33; M. Bailey, 'Villeinage in England: A Regional Case Study, c.1250-c.1349', *Economic History Review*, 62, 2 (2009), 451; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 47-8.

³⁶⁴ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 128-32; Bailey, *English Manor*, 28-9; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 451; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 3-5, 16-8; Dyer, 'Memories', 284-5; Dyer, 'Ineffectiveness of Lordship', 74-5.

³⁶⁵ Hyams, *Kings*, 233-4.

³⁶⁶ For example: Pelteret, *Slavery*, 115; M. Bloch, *Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Beer (Berkeley, 1975), 4-7.

³⁶⁷ *OHLE*, 215.

always been clear,³⁶⁸ but, as will be shown below, the layout of the Domesday entries suggest that there remained a conceptual distinction between the *servi* and the rest of the peasantry.

The meaning of unfreedom changed across this period, but at no point should it be viewed as an absolute.³⁶⁹ When there were degrees of freedom, it seems questionable whether legal status would have been the most significant defining factor for an individual's personal status. The extent to which unfreedom was a disability would have depended upon lordship, local landscape and resources, and the rents and services owed. Throughout, the legal and tenurial status of the peasantry will be considered alongside other factors that influenced status and standards of living.

This chapter will proceed chronologically, starting with the eleventh-century peasantry and considering how far they were affected by the Norman Conquest. Key themes that will be explored across the two centuries after the Conquest include population change and its impact on holding size and standards of living, as well as how far the fragmentation of holdings was prevented or facilitated by local conditions in lordship and the landscape.

2.1 The Peasantry and the Norman Conquest

There can be little doubt that the Norman Conquest had a dramatic impact upon landholders and landholding structures. Though some historians have claimed that the impact upon the lower levels of society was negligible,³⁷⁰ it is difficult to believe that

³⁶⁸ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 23.

³⁶⁹ *DBB*, 27-8.

³⁷⁰ For example see: *FD*, cxiii, cxxxiii.

the peasantry was entirely unaffected. From the initial violence that accompanied the Conquest, to the reorganisation of manorial structures, the dispossessed Anglo-Saxon lords were not the only group whose lives were disrupted by the Norman takeover.

Unfortunately, in most of the hundreds considered here, only post-Conquest information is provided for the peasantry, which makes it more difficult to quantify the impact of the Conquest. Even in Blackbourn/Bradmere, where pre- and post-Conquest figures are generally recorded, it requires supposition to extrapolate real peasant experiences from the statistics. In the other two hundreds, there is even less information about the Domesday peasantry, though some sense of their experience can be gained from studying the resources and value of estates. The details that are provided in Domesday suggest that the peasants of 1086 were under increased pressure from their new lords and more heavily burdened than they had been *TRE*.

2.1.1 Terminology

Maitland identified the ‘five great classes’ of ‘the tillers of the soil’ in Domesday. These, in ‘order of dignity and freedom are (1) *liberi homines*, (2) *sochemanni*, (3) *villani*, (4) *bordarii*, *cottarii* etc. (5) *servi*.’³⁷¹ The term *cottarii* does not appear in Domesday in these three hundreds, but *bordarii* and *cottarii* are generally considered to be comparable terms.³⁷² With a few exceptions, the peasantry in Langtree and Bunsty were categorised as *villani*, *bordarii* or *servi*. In Blackbourn/Bradmere, each of these categories appeared, but free men and sokemen also made up a significant proportion of the peasantry.

³⁷¹ *DBB*, 23-4.

³⁷² Where they both appear together, the *bordarii* tended to hold more land than the *cottarii*. R. Lennard, ‘The Economic Position of the Bordars and Cottars of Domesday Book’, *The Economic Journal*, 61, 242 (1951), 342-5, 349.

Historians are in broad agreement with Maitland's ordering of these categories, but there is little evidence within the Domesday folios to indicate the status of these groups. Lennard felt that the difficulties in distinguishing between these groups were caused by the use of two distinct criteria of categorisation: legal status (the *liberi homines* and *sochemanni* as 'free' and the *servi* as 'unfree'); and economic status (the *villani* as generally better off than the *bordarii* and *cottarii*).³⁷³ Though he provided broad generalisations as to the relative status of each group, Lennard emphasised that there were numerous exceptions and the terms were used to describe men of varying means.³⁷⁴

Freedom of movement has been identified as a key element of personal freedom, but many peasants who were legally free may have been economically bound to their land, and personally dependent upon their lords.³⁷⁵ Seebohm argued that the *villani* and *bordarii* of Domesday were legally unfree, but it seems likely that these categories were less specific.³⁷⁶ *Villani* was used as a general term for vast numbers of Domesday peasants. They often held a virgate or half-virgate each, but sometimes more or less.³⁷⁷ Equally, they experienced varying levels of subjection and dependence. Many of these peasants found themselves more tightly bound – or even newly bound – to their lords after the Norman Conquest, but that does not necessarily mean that they were legally unfree.³⁷⁸ The progression from dependence to legal unfreedom continued across the twelfth century, and the meaning of the term *villani* shifted as well, coming to refer

³⁷³ Lennard, *Rural England*, 338.

³⁷⁴ Lennard, 'Domesday Villani', 257, 259-60; 'The Economic Position of the Domesday Sokemen', *The Economic Journal*, 57, 226 (1947), 185-7; 'Bordars', 347-9, 371.

³⁷⁵ *DBB*, 42; Hyams, *Kings*, 234-5.

³⁷⁶ Seebohm, *English Village Community*, 76, 86-9, 91.

³⁷⁷ Lennard, 'Domesday Villani', 250-2.

³⁷⁸ Roffe, 'Norfolk Domesday', 35-7; see also Schofield, *Peasant*, 12.

explicitly to legal unfreedom in a way which it did not in the late eleventh century.³⁷⁹ Unfree villeinage was not merely a by-product of Henry II's legal reforms as Hyams has argued, but they did necessitate clearer definition of status and encouraged the development of the legal theory of villeinage.³⁸⁰ The imposition of this legal theory was not sudden and dramatic as Hilton suggested, but rather part of a process whereby the lower elements of society were increasingly dependent upon and obligated to their lords.³⁸¹

The transition from slavery to serfdom has been explored in several European contexts.³⁸² It was far from an English phenomenon, though it may have occurred later in England than elsewhere on the continent.³⁸³ By 1066, slaves made up no more than a significant minority of the Domesday population. For Pelteret, the decline of slavery was dramatically accelerated by the 'traumatic blow to the body politic delivered by the Norman Conquest that provided the new lords with the power to ignore distinctions between slave and free amongst the peasantry.'³⁸⁴ It made economic sense for lords to turn to exploiting a dependent peasantry, who were provided with land to support

³⁷⁹ P. Vinogradoff, *The Growth of the Manor* (London, 1920), 339-40; Stenton, *ASE*, 477-8; R.H. Hilton, 'Freedom and Villeinage in England', *P&P*, 31 (1965), 13-4; Hilton, *Bond Men*, 56; Dyer, *Making*, 98, 140; Hyams, *Kings*, 242, 249; Schofield, *Peasant*, 12-3; W. Davies, 'On servile status in the early Middle Ages' in *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. M.L. Bush (London, 1996), 225; Dyer, 'Memories', 278.

³⁸⁰ Hyams, *Kings*, xxi-xxii, 222-4.

³⁸¹ Hilton, 'Freedom', 6, 13-9. For the argument of a move towards unfreedom across the century, and the amalgamation of several different groups into the unfree 'villein' class, formalised by Henry II's legal reforms, see: Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 218-20; Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, 343-52.

³⁸² For example: Bloch, *Slavery*, 1-32; C. Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400-1000* (London, 1981), 100-29; P. Freedman, *Origins of Peasant Servitude in Medieval Catalonia* (Cambridge, 1991), 1-25, 89-118; P. Bonnassie, *From Slavery to Feudalism in south-western Europe*, trans. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 1991); Davies, 'On servile status', 225-246; C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400-1400* (London, 2009), 529-551.

³⁸³ Bloch, *Slavery*, 9, 25-6; Hilton, *Bond Men*, 56-9.

³⁸⁴ Pelteret, *Slavery*, 18.

themselves but also had to work for the lord, rather than slaves who had to be fed and housed and whose death, injury or incapacity would impact the lord financially.³⁸⁵

By the thirteenth century, the terms *servi* and *villani* seem practically interchangeable, but in the eleventh century the two groups were distinct.³⁸⁶ Thus, to translate *servi* as serf at both points elides two distinct categorisations.³⁸⁷ Similarly, translating *villanus* as villein in an eleventh-century context is problematic, because of all the legal and social implications the term has come to have.³⁸⁸ Most (though not all) works on Domesday tend to prefer the terms ‘villager’ or ‘villan’ – similar, but without the same connotations of unfreedom.³⁸⁹ In this section, the Latin terms will generally be used, but when a translation is given ‘slave’ and ‘villan’ will be preferred; nonetheless, the clear distinction these terms imply, and the clear distinction that the Domesday categorisations suggest, were probably far less clear on the ground.

The precise difference between free men and sokemen is difficult to establish, and does not seem to have been directly related to the amount of land held.³⁹⁰ Maitland suggested that free men and sokemen answered for their own geld payments, whilst the lord was responsible for the geld owed by his *villani* and *bordarii*, but he acknowledged that he had ‘little hope’ of establishing the difference between free men and sokemen.³⁹¹ Lennard and Stenton both felt that the free men and sokemen were distinguished from

³⁸⁵ W.D. Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Manchester, 1985), 51-2, 55-6.

³⁸⁶ J. Hatcher, ‘English Serfdom and Villeinage: Towards a Reassessment’, *P&P*, 90 (1981), 28-9.

³⁸⁷ Bloch, *Slavery*, 34-5, 51, 61-4; Clarke, ‘Domesday Slavery’, 42; Phillips, *Slavery*, 57.

³⁸⁸ J.S. Moore, ‘Domesday Slavery’, *ANS*, xi (1988), 191; J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History* (London, 1979), 468.

³⁸⁹ Lennard explicitly avoided the terms ‘villain’ and ‘villein’ ‘in order to avoid the associations of developed serfdom’: *Rural England*, vi.

³⁹⁰ Lennard, *Rural England*, 218-9, 225; Lennard, ‘Domesday Sokemen’; Stenton, *ASE*, 515-7; *OHLE*, 209-10; Roffe, ‘Norfolk Domesday’, 36-7; R. Welldon Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Eastern Counties* (London, 1967), 122-6.

³⁹¹ *DBB*, 23-5, 66-79, 104-6, 125-6. Douglas accepted this view: *East Anglia*, 108-9.

villans and bordars by their comparative freedom.³⁹² However, Roffe has claimed that in certain respects ‘the sokeman was undoubtedly closer to the villan than the free man’.³⁹³

The Blackburn evidence favours Lennard’s and Stenton’s views, as at times the terms *liberi homines* and *sochemanni* appear interchangeable: twenty-one free men in West Stow and fourteen free men in Stowlangtoft in Domesday Book were described as sokemen in Bury A.³⁹⁴ Nonetheless, of only 130 people specified as unable to give or sell their land in Blackburn/Bradmere in 1066, 127 were described as sokemen, and only two as free men and one as a freewoman. There is not one occasion within Blackburn/Bradmere where a sokeman is specifically described as free to give and sell his land. Moreover, as noted above, a much higher proportion of the sokemen than the free men belonged to their lord’s fold. Neither the free men nor the sokemen made up a distinct social or economic group. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that sokemen were generally less independent, more restricted in their ability to sell land and more heavily burdened than free men.³⁹⁵

The Domesday Entries

Since each case study falls within a different Domesday circuit, different formulae were used to record information about the peasantry. Nonetheless, the idea that the *servi* were different to the rest of the peasantry is reinforced by the layout of the entries in each hundred. For example in Bunsty:

³⁹² Lennard, *Rural England*, 218-9, 225; Stenton, *ASE*, 515-7.

³⁹³ Roffe, ‘Norfolk Domesday’, 37.

³⁹⁴ LDB 364-5 (Suffolk, 14,71; 77); *FD*, 7.

³⁹⁵ *VCH Suffolk*, i, 405.

[The fee of the Bishop of Coutances]

*In Lateberie [Lathbury]...Terra est iiii carucis. In dominio sunt ii carucae et vi villani cum vi bordarii habent ii carucas. Ibi iii servi et pratum iiii carucis...*³⁹⁶

The implication is that the *villani* and *bordarii* were conceptually different to the *servi*: they were grouped together and listed first; they had their own ploughs, whilst the *servi* were grouped with other demesne assets, like meadow land. There is more variety in Blackburn/Bradmore, but many entries give the same impression. For example, on the abbot's fee in Hinderclay the *servi* were also separated from the rest of the peasantry: *Tunc vi villani modo viii et tunc viii bordarii modo xii. Tunc vi carucae in dominio modo v. Tunc x servi modo viii. Semper ii carucae hominum et viii acrae prati...*³⁹⁷ The Langtree entries also contain this division:

[The fee of Walter Giffard]

*Idem [Hugh de Bolbec] tenet de Waltero Crawmares [Crowmarsh Gifford]. Ibi sunt x hidae. Terra xii carucis. Nunc in dominio ii carucae et iiii servi et xii villani cum xi bordariis habent v carucas...*³⁹⁸

In Langtree, the *servi* seem to be connected with the demesne ploughs, whilst the rest of the peasantry had their own ploughs. The entries for each case study suggest that the *servi* were more closely tied to the demesne than the other peasants, and were the primary labour force on the lord's land.

This alone is not enough to suggest that the Domesday *servi* were routinely treated differently, but it is suggestive evidence that they were conceptually distinct from the rest of the peasantry. Where free men and sokemen appear, they too are generally treated differently. In Bunsty, seven sokemen held in Weston Underwood and three in Lavendon. In Lavendon they were treated as subtenants holding one hide from the

³⁹⁶ GDB 145 (Buckinghamshire, 5,9).

³⁹⁷ LDB 364v (Suffolk, 14,74).

³⁹⁸ GDB 157v (Oxfordshire, 20,3).

bishop of Coutances,³⁹⁹ whilst in Weston they were grouped with the *villani*, *bordarii* and a certain Frenchman, though separately to the slaves.⁴⁰⁰ There were three free men in Goring, Langtree, and they were kept separate and listed after the *servi*, *villani* and *bordarii*.⁴⁰¹ In Blackbourn/Bradmere free men and sokemen appear more frequently. They were never treated with the *villani* and *bordarii*, instead almost always appearing as subtenants, or one level below the subtenants. For example, in Barningham, Burcard held three free men with one carucate from the abbot of St Edmunds.⁴⁰²

2.1.2 The Domesday Population

In 1086, the *villani* made up the greatest proportion of the peasant population, though it varied from county to county (Table 16). Though Suffolk had a high population density, part of Blackbourn/Bradmere fell within the Brecklands, which was relatively sparsely populated. As would be expected in an area with a lower population density, there were proportionally fewer smallholders in Blackbourn/Bradmere than in the county as a whole. Dividing Blackbourn/Bradmere into Breckland and High Suffolk regions is arbitrary, but some distinction in population density and proportion of smallholdings can be observed. Bailey has shown that the eastern part of the hundred contained fourteen landholders per square mile in 1086, whilst the western part, mostly Breckland, contained just eight.⁴⁰³ Those vills characterised by Bailey as ‘central Breckland’ settlements contained 3.9 people per plough and seventeen percent of them were *bordarii*; those that fell exclusively within the High Suffolk region contained 4.6 people per plough, and twenty-one percent were *bordarii*.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ GDB 145v (Buckinghamshire, 5,17).

⁴⁰⁰ GDB 145v (Buckinghamshire, 5,12).

⁴⁰¹ GDB 158 (Oxfordshire, 28,2).

⁴⁰² LDB 365v (Suffolk, 14,81).

⁴⁰³ Bailey, *Suffolk*, map 6.

⁴⁰⁴ Bailey, *Marginal*, 35-6.

Table 16 The Domesday Peasantry: A Summary of Darby's data

County	<i>Liberi Homines</i>		<i>Sochemanni</i>		<i>Villani</i>		<i>Bordarii/Cottarii</i>		<i>Servi</i>		Other		Total
Buckinghamshire	0	0.0%	20	0.4%	2,899	56.8%	1,331	26.1%	845	16.6%	8	0.2%	5,103
Oxfordshire	26	0.4%	0	0.0%	3,671	54.7%	1,948	29.0%	1002	14.9%	66	1.0%	6,713
Suffolk	7,753	40.7%	859	4.5%	3,094	16.2%	6,438	33.8%	892	4.7%	34	0.2%	19,070
Total (3 counties)	7,779	25.2%	879	2.8%	9,664	31.3%	9,717	31.5%	2,739	8.9%	108	0.3%	30,886
Total (all of DB)	13,553	5.0%	23,324	8.7%	109,230	40.6%	88,796	33.0%	28,235	10.5%	5,846	2.2%	268,984

Table 17 The Domesday Peasantry: Bunsty hundred

Vill	Hides	Virgates	Calc. hides	Ploughlands	Demesne Ploughs	Peasant Ploughs	Total ploughs	<i>Sochemanni</i>	<i>Villani</i>	<i>Bordarii</i>	<i>Servi</i>	Other	Total Men	Value <i>TRE</i>	Value <i>TRW</i>
Gayhurst	5.00	0.0	5.0	4	2	2	4	0	10	0	2	0	12	£8 0s 0d	£5 0s 0d
Hanslope	10.00	0.0	10.0	26	2	18	20	0	36	11	8	0	55	£24 0s 0d	£24 0s 0d
Haversham	10.00	0.0	10.0	10	1.5	7	8.5	0	16	8	5	0	29	£7 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Lathbury	10.00	0.0	10.0	8	5	3	8	0	13	10	6	0	29	£7 0s 0d	£8 10s 0d
Lavendon	18.50	5.8	20.0	22	9.5	7.5	17	3	24	34	8	0	69	£19 10s 0d	£13 2s 0d
Little Linford	4.00	0.0	4.0	4	2	2	4	0	6	0	0	0	6	£3 0s 0d	£2 0s 0d
Olney	10.00	0.0	10.0	10	3	7	10	0	24	5	5	0	34	£12 0s 0d	£12 0s 0d
Ravenstone	5.00	0.0	5.0	6	2	4	6	0	10	6	4	0	20	£6 0s 0d	£5 0s 0d
Stoke Goldington	4.00	4.0	5.0	5	3	2	5	0	5	8	2	0	15	£5 0s 0d	£5 0s 0d
Tyringham	9.00	2.3	9.6	12	6	6	12	0	12	12	10	0	34	£11 0s 0d	£8 10s 0d
Weston Underwood	6.75	10.7	9.4	8.5	1.75	6	7.75	7	4	5	3	1	20	£8 0s 0d	£6 10s 0d
Total	92.25	22.8	97.9	115.5	37.75	64.5	102.25	10	160	99	53	1	323	£110 10s 0d	£95 12s 0d

Table 18 The Domesday Peasantry: Blackburn/Bradmere hundred

Vill	Carucates	Acres	Calc. Carucates	Ploughs 'then'	Ploughs 'now'	Ploughs difference	<i>Liberi Homines</i>	<i>Sochemanni</i>	<i>Villani</i>	<i>Bordarii</i>	<i>Servi</i>	Other	Total men	Value <i>TRE</i>	Value <i>TRW</i>
Ashfield	7.0	165	8.4	16.5	15.5	-1	41	1	1	19	2	0	64	£8 12s 0d	£8 12s 0d
Bardwell	2.5	108	3.4	6.5	6	-0.5	10.5	20	0	5	2	0	37.5	£2 3s 0d	£4 3s 0d
Barnham	4.5	140	5.7	9	8.75	-0.25	20	0	0	10	5	0	35	£5 4s 0d	£5 18s 0d
Barningham	3.5	12	3.6	12.5	9.25	-3.25	25	0	5	4	1	0	35	£2 15s 0d	£3 15s 0d
Coney Weston	2.5	30	2.8	8.5	6.5	-2	0	12	0	3	1	0	16	£5 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Culford	2.5	0	2.5	6.25	5.75	-0.5	1	18	2	9	2	0	32	£4 10s 0d	£4 10s 0d
Elmswell	2.0	40	2.3	8	8	0	5	0	16	14	5	0	40	£5 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Euston	1.0	0	1.0	2.5	2.5	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	6	£1 10s 0d	£1 10s 0d
Great Fakenham	6.0	110	6.9	13.5	13.5	0	22	6.5	17	11	10	0	66.5	£15 0s 0d	£15 0s 0d
Hepworth	3.5	70	4.1	8.5	8.5	0	20.5	0	3	4	4	0	31.5	£1 10s 0d	£2 10s 0d
Hinderclay	4.0	40	4.3	10	9	-1	0	7	8	12	8	0	35	£8 0s 0d	£8 0s 0d
Honington	2.0	0	2.0	5	5	0	16	0	0	2	0	0	18	£1 0s 0d	£1 0s 0d
Hopton	2.0	0	2.0	6	6	0	23	0	0	4	0	0	27	£1 0s 0d	£1 10s 0d
Hunston	2.5	0	2.5	5	5	0	16	0	0	4	0	0	20	£2 6s 0d	£2 6s 0d
Ingham	6.0	40	6.3	14	13	-1	10	21	1	4	9	0	45	£8 5s 0d	£9 3s 0d
Ixworth	7.5	361	10.5	20	15.5	-4.5	38	0	0	4	4	5	51	£10 7s 0d	£11 17s 0d
Ixworth Thorpe	2.0	157	3.3	7	5.75	-1.25	18	0	0	5	0	0	23	£2 13s 6d	£2 13s 6d
Knettishall	1.0	66	1.6	3	3	0	5	0	0	6	0	0	11	£1 5s 6d	£1 5s 6d
Langham	4.0	20	4.2	7	5.25	-1.75	9	0	0	4	3	0	16	£4 13s 0d	£3 13s 0d
Little Fakenham	0.0	60	0.5	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	£0 5s 0d	£0 5s 0d
Little Livermere	2.0	0	2.0	4	4	0	7	0	0	3	0	0	10	£1 10s 0d	£1 10s 0d
Market Weston	4.0	183	5.5	13.5	7	-6.5	12.5	10	2	7	2	0	33.5	£4 4s 0d	£4 4s 0d
Norton	6.0	0	6.0	17	17	0	0	34	9	21	6	0	70	£10 0s 0d	£16 0s 0d
Rickinghall	3.0	30	3.3	11	10.5	-0.5	3	22	2	7	2	0	36	£5 15s 0d	£7 15s 0d
Rushford	3.0	9	3.1	4	3	-1	8	0	0	0	0	0	8	£2 0s 0d	£2 0s 0d
Sapiston	2.0	56	2.5	4	4	0	24	0	0	2	1	0	27	£2 11s 0d	£3 4s 0d
Stanton	4.0	160	5.3	11	12	1	10	60	0	3	3	0	76	£7 11s 0d	£7 14s 0d
Stowlangtoft	4.5	28	4.7	8.5	6	-2.5	16	1	0	8	0	0	25	£6 9s 8d	£6 9s 8d
Thelnetham	3.0	60	3.5	9	9	0	23	0	0	14	3	2	42	£4 5s 4d	£7 5s 4d
Troston	2.5	0	2.5	5	5	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	24	£1 0s 0d	£1 10s 0d
Walsham-le-Willows	7.0	60	7.5	18	14.5	-3.5	54.5	0	0	6	0	0	60.5	£5 10s 0d	£7 15s 0d
Wattisfield	2.5	16	2.6	10.5	6.5	-4	29	0	1	1	1	0	32	£3 10s 0d	£3 12s 0d
West Stow	2.5	0	2.5	7	7	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	22	£1 4s 0d	£1 4s 0d
Wordwell	2.0	0	2.0	5	5	0	11	0	0	4	2	0	17	£1 10s 0d	£1 10s 0d
Wyken	4.0	74	4.6	8.5	9.5	1	16.5	2	0	19	3	0	40.5	£4 10s 0d	£5 3s 0d
Total	118.0	2,095	135.5	305.75	272.75	-33	543.5	214.5	71	219	79	7	1,134	£152 9s 0d	£176 7s 0d

Table 19 The Domesday Peasantry: Langtree hundred

Vill	Hides	Ploughlands	Demesne ploughs	Peasant ploughs	Total Ploughs	<i>Liberi Homines</i>	<i>Villani</i>	<i>Bordarii</i>	<i>Servi</i>	Total men	Value <i>TRE</i>	Value <i>TRW</i>
Checkendon	5	7	1	2	3	0	8	3	4	15	£4 0s 0d	£3 0s 0d
Crowmarsh Gifford	10	12	2	5	7	0	12	11	4	27	£10 0s 0d	£20 0s 0d
Gatehampton	6.5	5.5	3	2.5	5.5	0	8	4	4	16	£10 0s 0d	£15 0s 0d
Goring	20	10	3	10	13	3	21	2	7	33	£5 0s 0d	£6 0s 0d
Ipsden	2.5	4	1	3	4	0	6	5	0	11	£2 10s 0d	£2 10s 0d
Little Stoke	3	4	1	2	3	0	6	2	2	10	£4 0s 0d	£3 0s 0d
Mapledurham Chaussy	3	5	2	3	5	0	7	5	1	13	£5 0s 0d	£7 0s 0d
Mongewell	10	10	3	6	9	0	6	11	5	22	£10 0s 0d	£14 0s 0d
Newnham Murren	10	16	4	5	9	0	13	10	9	32	£12 0s 0d	£17 0s 0d
North Stoke	10	15	4	14	18	0	26	9	8	43	£13 0s 0d	£15 0s 0d
Whitchurch	10	15	3	12	15	0	20	7	5	32	£15 0s 0d	£20 0s 0d
Total	90	103.5	27	64.5	91.5	3	133	69	49	254	£90 10s 0d	£122 10s 0d

Table 20 The Domesday Peasantry: Comparison of the three hundreds

Hundred	<i>Liberi Homines</i>		<i>Sochemanni</i>		<i>Villani</i>		<i>Bordarii</i>		<i>Servi</i>		Other		Total
Bunsty	0	0.0%	10	3.1%	160	49.5%	99	30.7%	53	16.4%	1	0.3%	323
Langtree	3	1.2%	0	0.0%	133	52.4%	69	27.2%	49	19.3%	0	0.0%	254
Blackbourn/Bradmere	543.5	47.9%	214.5	18.9%	71	6.3%	219	19.3%	79	7.0%	7	0.6%	1,134
Total	546.5	33.0%	224.5	13.1%	364	21.3%	387	22.6%	181	10.6%	8	0.5%	1,711

Keith Bailey showed that there were few slaves in southern Buckinghamshire, and instead they were concentrated in the north-west and north-east.⁴⁰⁵ Nonetheless, slaves were not particularly common in Bunsty hundred in north-east Buckinghamshire. There were proportionally fewer *villani* in this hundred (50 percent) and more *bordarii* (31 percent) than the rest of the county. In the south and east of Oxfordshire there were generally more *villani* and *bordarii*, whilst the slaves in that county were concentrated in the north and west.⁴⁰⁶ Langtree hundred was an exception to this pattern, because the proportions of *villani* and *bordarii* were similar to the Oxfordshire average, but there was a higher proportion of slaves (19 percent) than would be expected in a southern hundred. Tables 17-20 show that such variety was typical from settlement to settlement, as much as it was from region to region.

Ecclesiastical estates tended to have more *servi* than lay estates. Arguably, the manumission of slaves would have represented the permanent alienation of church property, which was prohibited by canon law, so slavery persisted longer on church lands.⁴⁰⁷ No churchmen held in Langtree in 1086. Two bishops, Odo of Bayeux and Geoffrey of Coutances, held in Bunsty, but they held in the capacity of lay barons and their estates were not associated with their dioceses. In Blackbourn/Bradmere, the number of slaves declined on some of Bury St Edmunds' estates between 1066 and 1086, despite the fact that they were held by a religious house.⁴⁰⁸ There had been an increase elsewhere on Bury's lands in the hundreds, but some of its other estates had no slaves at all, whilst some lay estates were particularly well-stocked.⁴⁰⁹ Thus, the tendency for ecclesiastical estates to have more slaves than lay estates is not evident in

⁴⁰⁵ K.A. Bailey, 'Buckingham Slavery in 1086', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 37 (1997), 76.

⁴⁰⁶ Blair, 'Oxfordshire Domesday', 4; K. Tiller and G. Darkes, (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, (Chipping Norton, 2010), 34-5.

⁴⁰⁷ Pelteret, *Slavery*, 77, 224.

⁴⁰⁸ For example, Stanton, Hinderclay: LDB 364-364v (Suffolk, 14,72; 74).

⁴⁰⁹ For example, Ingham, Elmswell: LDB 363v, 364v (Suffolk, 14,69; 73).

Blackbourn/Bradmere. Across Suffolk as a whole, however, Bury did have a high proportion of slaves on its estates.⁴¹⁰

It has been suggested that lesser tenants-in-chief and local subtenants tended to have a high proportion of *servi* on their estates, since smaller landlords lacking a large tenantry would have needed slaves to work their demesne.⁴¹¹ *Servi* accounted for just 15 percent of the population on Winemar's lands in Bunsty.⁴¹² Many of the smaller subtenants, like Gilbert de Blosseville, Ralph and Roger holding from Countess Judith in Lavendon had no *servi* at all, and nor did Ketil, a particularly small landholder.⁴¹³ In Langtree, the two villis with the highest proportion of *servi* were held by Miles Crispin, an important landholder with substantial estates in the region.⁴¹⁴ The three hundreds studied, therefore, do not provide support for the view that *servi* were more common on the estates of minor tenants-in-chief and subtenants.

The Impact of the Conquest

For most of the country, Domesday does not provide *TRE* information about the *villani*, *bordarii* and *servi*, so it is difficult to know how they were affected by the Conquest. It is possible that some of the peasantry recorded in 1086 had suffered a reduction in status and been re-categorised by the incoming Norman lords. Sometimes coincidence of numbers supports this interpretation.⁴¹⁵ In Bunsty there were seven *villani* in 1086 where Alli had held with seven other thegns *TRE*; ten thegns had held in Weston

⁴¹⁰ M. Bailey, 'An Introduction to the Suffolk Domesday' in *Little Domesday Book: Suffolk*, i (Alecto ed., London, 2000), 13.

⁴¹¹ Faith, *Peasantry*, 67; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, 140-1.

⁴¹² GDB 152 (Buckinghamshire, 46,1).

⁴¹³ GDB 145, 152v (Buckinghamshire, 5,8; 53,3-5).

⁴¹⁴ GDB 159-159v (Oxfordshire, 35,1; 11).

⁴¹⁵ See Maitland's examples of Meldreth and Orwell, Cambridgeshire: *DBB*, 63.

Underwood where three sokemen, four *villani* and three *bordarii* held by 1086.⁴¹⁶ In these cases, it is tempting to conclude that these post-Conquest peasants were identical with, or the descendants of, the thegns of 1066. If so, these men had seen a dramatic reduction in status. They had been re-categorised as lower status, dependent peasants, which would have impacted upon them economically and limited their independence. However, this conclusion turns on the presumption that there were no other peasants on the land before the Conquest, and this may not always have been the case. If they were not identical with these peasants, it is possible that they were entirely dispossessed, with even more dramatic consequences for their well-being.

More can be said about the impact of the Conquest in Blackbourn/Bradmere, because Little Domesday often provides ‘then’ and ‘now’ figures for the *villani*, *bordarii* and *servi*. Unfortunately, however, the heavy abbreviation of the entries means that interpreting the information about the free men and sokemen is more problematic. It is often difficult to establish the tense of an entry, meaning that it is unclear if the free men and sokemen were holding just *TRE*, just *TRW* or both.

Domesday convention would suggest that the free men and sokemen were holding *TRE* as the survey was supposed to provide information about pre-Conquest landholders; van Houts’ recent article makes this presumption.⁴¹⁷ However, there is some evidence that they also continued to hold *TRW*. For example:

[The fee of St Edmunds]

In Walsham [le Willows] xxx *liberi homines* de iii *carucatis terrae*. ii *bordarii*. Tunc ix *carucae* modo vi et viii *acrae prati*. Silva de xxx *porcis*. Hi *potuerunt dare et vendere terras suas* sed

⁴¹⁶ GDB 145v (Buckinghamshire, 5,12; 15). For the low-status of the Buckinghamshire thegns see K.A. Bailey, ‘*Vendere Potuit*: ‘He Could Sell’, to coin a Domesday phrase’, *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 40 (2000), 79-81.

⁴¹⁷ E. van Houts, ‘The Women of Bury St Edmunds’ in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. T. Licence (Woodbridge, 2014), 55-7, 73.

saca et soca et commendatio remanet *sancto*. Tunc valet xxx solidos modo xLv. De hisdem liberis hominibus et de hac terra tenet Robertus Blundus x liberos homines de ii carucatis terrae et ii caruca et valet xL solidos in eadem pretio.⁴¹⁸

In this case, the first sentence lacks a verb, so the tense is ambiguous. However, the abbreviation *potuer'* can only be expanded grammatically using the past tense *potuerunt*; so, the thirty free men held the land *TRE* and were able to sell it. The final sentence is explicit that Robert Blund holds (present tense) ten free men in 1086. The entry provides no clues as to what happened to the remaining twenty free men and two bordars. Information of this kind is not provided in every entry, but the many that do suggest that some free men or sokemen held both in 1066 and in 1086. By contrast, on no occasion in Blackbourn/Bradmere is it explicitly stated that the men did not still hold *TRW*, and it is never specified that a different number held at different times.

Further evidence that free men and sokemen continued to hold in 1086 can be found in Bury A, B and C. Bury A is an abbreviated copy of Bury's estates in Little Domesday. Although copied from Little Domesday or a shared source,⁴¹⁹ Bury A is still valuable for consideration of free men and sokemen as it only records *TRW* information. Thus, wherever free men or sokemen are mentioned, it can be presumed that they held *TRW*, and significantly, most entries mention the same number of free men or sokemen as Domesday, with just occasional differences (Appendix A). Bury B was compiled shortly after the Domesday survey and contains a lot of information that could not have been drawn directly from Domesday Book. Though a direct comparison cannot be made between the numbers of free men and sokemen in Domesday and Bury B because not all of the sub-tenancies are recognisable in both surveys, it is significant that the subtenants in Bury B were regularly described as not just holding land, but holding free men and sokemen with their lands. For example, Fulcher held ninety acres at Hepworth

⁴¹⁸ LDB 367 (Suffolk, 14,92).

⁴¹⁹ Galbraith, 'Making of Domesday', 167-8.

from Bury, but also held a further thirty-six acres in the same vill with four free men.⁴²⁰ This implies that numerous pre-Conquest free men and sokemen were not dispossessed after the Conquest, but were placed under the influence of a lord and pushed further down the tenurial scale.⁴²¹

Douglas argued that Bury C provided a list of the names of the free men and sokemen recorded in Domesday Book.⁴²² However, there is not a convincing correlation between Bury C and Domesday in terms of numbers of men, acreage or values.⁴²³ If Bury C was later than Domesday, Lennard and Davis have shown that it was compiled before 1119 so at most thirty-three years later.⁴²⁴ It is significant that the names in Bury C are mostly of Anglo-Saxon or Danish origin, proving that in this area many peasants survived the Conquest, and they or their descendants continued to hold their land.⁴²⁵

Bury A, B and C cannot prove that all of the sokemen and free men held their lands in Blackburn/Bradmere *TRE* and *TRW*, not least because they cover only the abbot's lands. However, coupled with the indications provided by Domesday itself, they do imply that considerable numbers of them did survive the Conquest. It follows that when Little Domesday supplies population information without specifying the date to which these applied, it may be legitimate to suppose that they refer to both 1066 and 1086.⁴²⁶ This cannot be proven in every case, but it shows that there was not a widespread

⁴²⁰ *FD*, 17.

⁴²¹ See Lewis, 'Invention', 133-4.

⁴²² *FD*, lix.

⁴²³ Recently, van Houts has argued that these names refer to the free peasants holding in 1086, so they can be compared with Domesday figures to establish the change in numbers of free peasants before and after the Conquest: van Houts, 'Women of Bury', 55-9.

⁴²⁴ Lennard showed it was no later than the death of Abbot Ailbold in 1119, *Rural England*, 359, 359n; Davis agreed 1119 latest, as Athelstan holding thirty acres at Ampton was dead by this date, *Kalendar*, xxxviii.

⁴²⁵ *FD*, cxvii-cxxii.

⁴²⁶ *FD*, cxxii. Darby also concluded that most figures referred to both *TRE* and *TRW*: Darby, *Eastern England*, 171.

dispossession of these groups. However, whilst many of the free men and sokemen held allodial lands before the Conquest, by 1086 all except two free men who remained in the king's hand belonged to a tenant-in-chief's fee in Domesday.⁴²⁷ Though this was probably preferable to dispossession, adding free men and sokemen to manors could have affected them economically as well as limiting their freedom, as it may have been accompanied by the payment of new or increased rents and dues.

Information about 1066 and 1086 is provided more explicitly for many of the *villani*, *bordarii* and *servi* in Blackbourn/Bradmere. Unfortunately, not all of the entries contain *TRE* figures, so when comparing numbers of peasants from 1066-1086 only those with figures for both dates can be included.⁴²⁸ Table 21 shows the numbers of peasants broken down by classification and by vill, in the instances where both *TRE* and *TRW* figures are available.

The total difference in numbers from 1066 to 1086 was not huge, but in certain vills it represented a substantial proportion of the peasant population. On the abbot's lands in Hinderclay the number of *villani* increased from six to eight, and the number of *bordarii* from eight to twelve; the number of *servi* decreased from ten to eight. Possibly two *servi* were freed and absorbed into the ranks of the *villani* or *bordarii*. However, there were numerous other occasions when the number of *servi* declined, whilst the numbers of other peasants either declined as well or remained the same. For example, in neighbouring Rickinghall there were two fewer *servi* by 1086, but also two fewer *villani*. As the vills were contiguous, and both were held by Abbot Baldwin, it may be

⁴²⁷ LDB 447 (Suffolk, 75,1-2). See also: *DBB*, 128; Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, 149-50; Lewis, 'Invention', 133-4; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 21-3.

⁴²⁸ This means discounting fewer than 20% of the *villani* and *servi*, but 35% of the *bordarii*. Though the results may be skewed, the vast majority are included within the sample.

possible to associate the decline in *villani* in Rickinghall with the increase in Hinderclay, but it is impossible to know how likely or common relocation would have been.⁴²⁹ Moreover, St Edmunds' holding at Coney Weston also had two fewer *villani* by 1086, without any such explanation being apparent.

Table 21 Population Change in Blackburn/Bradmere

Vill	<i>Villani</i>			<i>Bordarii</i>			<i>Servi</i>			Total Difference
	Then	Now	+/-	Then	Now	+/-	Then	Now	+/-	
Barningham	6	3	-3	2	4	2	0	0	0	-1
Coney Weston	2	0	-2	3	3	0	1	1	0	-2
Elmswell	16	16	0	14	14	0	4	5	1	1
Hinderclay	6	8	2	8	12	4	10	8	-2	4
Ingham	1	1	0	4	4	0	3	9	6	6
Ixworth	0	0	0	4	4	0	7	4	-3	-3
Langham	1	0	-1	3	3	0	3	3	0	-1
Market Weston	4	2	-2	1	1	0	2	2	0	-2
Rickinghall	4	2	-2	6	6	0	4	2	-2	-4
Stanton	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	-1	-1
Thelnetham	0	0	0	8	8	0	6	2	-4	-4
Wyken	0	0	0	10	7	-3	5	3	-2	-5
Total	40	32	-8	63	66	3	49	42	-7	-12

A study of Essex has shown that an increase in the peasant population, particularly the number of *villani*, was often associated with an increase in the value of an estate.⁴³⁰ Though there were two more *villani* and four more *bordarii* at Hinderclay in 1086, it was worth £8 in 1086, just as it had been in 1066. There was a decrease in the number of ploughs, implying that the increase in population was not matched by an increase in productivity. There was also a reduction of two *villani* at Market Weston but the value of this vill remained the same, and at Barningham, Coney Weston and Rickinghall the value increased, despite a reduction in the population.

⁴²⁹ Faith, *Peasantry*, 237.

⁴³⁰ J. McDonald and G.D. Snooks, *Domesday Economy: a new approach to Anglo-Norman history* (Oxford, 1984), 107-8, 110, 115; Faith, *Peasantry*, 205.

Though the Blackbourn/Bradmere entries provide more information about the peasantry than other parts of Domesday Book, there is no explanation of cause and effect, and it is far from certain that all changes should be associated with the Conquest. If the Conquest did have a particularly tumultuous effect, one would expect the number of dependent peasants to increase, as dispossessed landholders were absorbed into their ranks. As shown, this did not happen in Blackbourn/Bradmere.

Considering the continuity in terms of numbers, it may be possible to accept Douglas' conclusion that '...the influence of the Norman settlement on the peasantry on the Bury lands and their social organization was very slight'.⁴³¹ However, just because similar numbers of men were on the land, does not mean that they held by similar terms at both points. There is evidence that vast numbers of free men and sokemen were newly subjected to lords after the Conquest, when previously they had held allodial lands.⁴³² For example, Robert Blund received three carucates in Ixworth that had been held by his antecessor Aki the Dane. But in addition to this core holding, he had also accumulated two and a half carucates held by twenty-five free men, and one carucate and eighty acres held by a further five free men. He augmented his hold in this vill by adding 200 acres held by Ketil and twenty-nine acres held by six free men under Ketil.⁴³³ No tenurial link existed between these thirty-eight men in 1066. It seems likely that the free men held allodial lands, but were subjected to Robert's lordship in the aftermath of the Conquest. The population did not substantially change, but the freedom of the men was reduced.

⁴³¹ *FD*, cxxxiii.

⁴³² *DBB*, 128; Lewis, 'Invention', 133-4; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 21-3; Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, 149; Roffe, 'Norfolk Domesday', 11, 34-5; van Houts, 'Women of Bury', 55-9.

⁴³³ *LDB* 438v, 439v (Suffolk, 66,1; 9-10).

Domesday Values

It is not clear exactly what the Domesday values referred to. Some have argued that it was the amount that a manor could be expected to render if it was let at farm to a tenant.⁴³⁴ It could refer to the total received by the lord of the land, including rents from his peasants.⁴³⁵ Or it could be a genuine attempt at a valuation of the land and resources of an estate.⁴³⁶ Obviously these are not mutually exclusive, as the rental income a lord could expect would be influenced by its value, but it would also be influenced by the power relationships between lord and tenant and the intensity of seignorial exploitation.⁴³⁷ The possible inequity of such relationships is laid bare on the occasions where Domesday specifies that the rent of an estate was higher than its annual value.⁴³⁸ Different methods were probably used for different entries, and at times the round numbers provided imply that they are estimations rather than accurate valuations.⁴³⁹ Nonetheless, this probably reflected the different ways in which lords made an income from their estates. It seems likely that the values were an estimate of the cash income that the landholder could expect to earn each year, whether through demesne farming or a rental income, or a combination of both. It seems certain that a higher value would have impacted upon the peasants on the land, whether directly through the increase of rents or through increased pressure to labour harder and produce more.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁴ For example: *DBB*, 444, 444n2; Faith, *Peasantry*, 181; Dyer, *Lords*, 52-3.

⁴³⁵ Lennard, *Rural England*, 127-8, 374; Roffe, *Domesday*, 41.

⁴³⁶ Darby, *Domesday England*, 208-11.

⁴³⁷ J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford, 2001), 201-3.

⁴³⁸ For example Pluckley, Kent, valued at £15, owed £20 rents. GDB 3v (Kent, 2,20). See Darby, *Domesday England*, 211; Lennard, *Rural England*, 127.

⁴³⁹ *DBB*, 472-3; Darby, *Domesday England*, 209. McDonald and Snooks refuted this suggestion, claiming that the values were largely accurate and there was a strong, identifiable relationship between values and resources: McDonald and Snooks, *Domesday Economy*, 77-124.

⁴⁴⁰ Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, 178; Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 28.

According to Welldon Finn's statistics, aggregate values increased in fourteen shires between 1066 and 1086, including Suffolk and Oxfordshire.⁴⁴¹ The increase of 16 percent in Blackbourn/Bradmere was lower than the mean change in Suffolk as a whole; by contrast, Langtree had increased by 35 percent, a higher rate than the mean change in Oxfordshire.

Table 22 Percentage change in values from 1066 to 1086: A summary of Welldon Finn's data

Shire	% change <i>TRE-TRW</i>
Buckinghamshire	-8
Oxfordshire	22
Suffolk	21

Table 23 Domesday Values

Hundred	Value 1066	Value 1086	Change <i>TRE-TRW</i>	Change (%)
Bunsty	£110 10s 0d	£95 12s 0d	-£14 18s 0d	-13.5
Langtree	£90 10s 0d	£122 10s 0d	£32 0s 0d	35.4
Blackbourn/Bradmere	£152 9s 0d	£176 7s 0d	£23 18s 0d	15.7
Total	£353 9s 0d	£394 9s 0d	£41 0s 0d	11.6

The total value of Buckinghamshire had declined by 8 percent between 1066 and 1086, so the decline of 14 percent in Bunsty was more dramatic than in the rest of the county. It is unsurprising that counties like Yorkshire, laid waste by the harrying of the north, decreased in value from 1066 to 1086, but it is harder to explain why Buckinghamshire was so affected. Buckinghamshire was not the only county that did not suffer in the harrying but still saw a reduction in value.⁴⁴² Baxter has argued that in many cases these falling values can be explained as 'a function of the process by which free peasants' holdings were absorbed into manors', meaning that even a reduction in value could indicate increased pressure on those actually working the land.⁴⁴³ The lord's income from the estate in 1086 may have been lower than what it generated in 1066, but

⁴⁴¹ R. Welldon Finn, *The Norman Conquest and Its Effects on the Economy, 1066-86* (London, 1971), 35.

⁴⁴² Welldon Finn, *Economy*, 35.

⁴⁴³ Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', 106-7.

rather than indicating a reduction in output, an apparent fall in value could instead be the result of a redistribution of profits. Thus, in Weston Underwood, Bunsty, in 1066 ten thegns and one man held seven and a half hides freely; this tenement was valued at £6. By 1086, all of this land was held by the Bishop of Coutances; there were three sokemen, one Frenchman, four villans, three bordars and three slaves on the land, and it was valued at £5. It is possible that the three sokemen, and even some of the villans and bordars, could be identical with the eleven men holding in 1066 or their descendants. If so, they had seen a reduction in social status, but also in economic status: whilst the eleven men had received £6 from their land in 1066, by 1086 £5 had to go to the lord before those working the land could even consider their own subsistence. Therefore a reduction in value may actually hide an increase in productivity on an estate, as men had to pay out to lords as well as generate income for themselves. This implies that the peasants on the land were under increased pressure by 1086, and obligated to work harder than they had needed to in order to survive before the Conquest.

In Blackbourn/Bradmere, the imposition of a subtenant between the tenant-in-chief and some or all of the free men and sokemen generally led to an increase in value. In Hepworth, twenty free men had held two and a half carucates *TRE*, valued at 20s; by 1086 it was held in chief by St Edmunds, and Fulcher and Peter de Valognes held half as subtenants. The abbot's half was worth 8s *TRW*, but Fulcher's and Peter's half was valued at 32s, so overall the estate had doubled in value.⁴⁴⁴ It seems likely that the intrusion of two subtenants on the land had driven the value up, to ensure that they both made a profit from the land. Subtenants were not always important lords in their own right, but often they were of at least local significance; this could enable them to exert a greater pressure on the peasantry by exercising more direct lordship on the land.

⁴⁴⁴ LDB 365v (Suffolk, 14,78).

The coercive power of lords may mean that Domesday values were not always directly contingent on the actual value of an estate: powerful lords may have been able to enforce high rents, even when the resources of an estate did not justify them. In Blackbourn/Bradmere, there were thirty-three fewer plough-teams in 1086 than there had been in 1066, yet still the value of the hundred increased. *TRE* figures for plough-teams are not consistently recorded for the other hundreds. However, a few entries in the Oxfordshire Domesday do mention the number of *TRE* ploughs, instead of the number of ploughlands.⁴⁴⁵ The existence of these entries has led to a consensus amongst scholars of the Oxfordshire Domesday that the ploughland figures in this county probably referred to the number of *TRE* ploughs.⁴⁴⁶ If this was the case, then there were twelve fewer plough-teams in Langtree hundred by 1086.

In Buckinghamshire, there is such a close coincidence between ploughlands and plough-teams that it seems likely that the ploughlands simply meant the number of ploughs required to cultivate the available arable, rather than anything more complicated. If this was the case, then Bunsty was understocked, as there were 115.5 ploughlands, but just 102.25 ploughs. This could help to explain the reduction in values. However, the fact that both Blackbourn/Bradmere and Langtree saw a reduction in plough-teams, but still increased in value makes this explanation seem less likely. Seventeen Bunsty entries recorded a drop in value between 1066 and 1086, but only two

⁴⁴⁵ Manors of Bampton, Benson, Bloxham, Banbury, Cropredy, Eynsham, and one unidentified manor. GDB 154v, 155, 157 (Oxfordshire, 1,1; 6; 7a; 6,4-6; 14,5).

⁴⁴⁶ Blair, 'Oxfordshire Domesday', 3-4, 4n; Emery, *Oxfordshire*, 70; Tiller, (ed.), *Atlas*, 34-5. For various explanations of the ploughland figures, see: *DBB*, 418-35; P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford, 1908), 156; Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, 255; Darby, *Domesday England*, 118-20; J.S. Moore, 'The Domesday Teamland: A Reconsideration', *TRHS*, 5th Ser., 14 (1964), 109-30; R. Welldon Finn, 'The Teamland of the Domesday Inquest', *EHR*, 85 (1968), 95-101; S. Harvey, 'Domesday Book and Anglo-Norman Governance', *TRHS*, 5th Ser., 25 (1975), 186-7; S. Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland in Domesday Book' in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. P. Sawyer (London, 1985), 86-103.

of these were understocked; the other four places with fewer teams than ploughlands saw no change in value. The lack of correlation between plough-teams, ploughlands and values indicates that the value of an estate depended upon more than arable cultivation. Other resources would have been important, but the possibility that powerful lords were enforcing high rents from the peasantry, even when the resources they had to work their land were diminishing, should not be dismissed. This has stark implications for the well-being of the peasantry, and suggests that the impact of the Conquest and the intrusion of new lords had dramatic, negative effects on the lowest groups in society.

2.1.3 Conclusion

The foregoing has identified some of the shortcomings of Domesday evidence for investigating the lives of the eleventh-century peasantry. Recording across circuits is inconsistent, and there is a lack of clearly comparable data for 1066 and 1086. There are ambiguities in the formulae used to describe the peasants, and a lack of clarity in defining terms. Nonetheless, valuable information can be drawn from its folios. Whilst the distinctions between the categories of peasant are not always clear and may have been even less so on the ground, Domesday provides an insight into how the lower levels of society were perceived by the conquerors.

Survival of a population in terms of numbers does not mean that their position remained unchanged. An increase in value seems certain to represent increased pressure on the peasantry in terms of rents and workload, and this cannot be seen as anything but devastating for the peasantry in Langtree and Blackbourn/Bradmere. As shown, though the values decreased in Bunsty, this may obscure continued or increased pressure on the

peasantry in this hundred too.⁴⁴⁷ The low status thegns in Bunsty held in 1066, but their post-Conquest fates are not elucidated within Domesday. If individuals did survive, then they appear to have been absorbed into the ranks of the dependent peasantry. In pre-Conquest Blackbourn/Bradmere, many of the free men and sokemen seem to have held allodial lands, and very few held in dependent tenure. By 1086, all except two free men who remained in the king's hand were attached to a tenant-in-chief's fee. The need to list land and men by fee in the Domesday survey may have encouraged this process, and the book itself acts as its ultimate confirmation. When considered alongside factors discussed in the previous section, such as castle building, other seigneurial building projects and lordly appropriation of resources, it is difficult but to conclude that the Conquest must have led to 'a general worsening of the social and economic status of the peasantry.'⁴⁴⁸

2.2 The Thirteenth-Century Peasantry

The next available snapshot of peasant landholding for all three hundreds was compiled nearly two centuries after Domesday. The Hundred Rolls of 1279-80 provide more detail than the eleventh-century survey, including the names, rents and services of the peasantry, but they do not survive for the entire country. Whilst the original rolls for Langtree and Bunsty are preserved at the National Archives, those for Blackbourn only survive as copied fragments in Bury manuscripts, meaning that analysis of this double-hundred cannot be as full as for the other two hundreds without using supplementary material, like the late twelfth-century *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson and government records.

⁴⁴⁷ Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', 106-8.

⁴⁴⁸ Miller, *Ely*, 71.

There are some difficulties comparing the three hundreds because of differences in terminology and the structure and detail of the surviving evidence. One of the main difficulties is interpreting the units used to describe landholdings: the size of an acre was variable, and the number of acres in a virgate could vary from place to place, and even in the same vill. Generally, an average of thirty acres per virgate is presumed in the historiography, but this did not seem adequate in this study because of local variety. This problem is explored in more detail in Appendix B, where evidence is presented for the size of a virgate in each case study. Where it is necessary to convert acres to virgates and hides or *vice versa*, an average of thirty acres per virgate in Blackbourn, twenty-five acres in Langtree and sixteen acres in Bunsty has been presumed. There are difficulties with applying these average figures, so wherever possible like is compared with like, and the measurements provided in the evidence are used rather than a conversion.

In the two centuries after Domesday, England witnessed extensive change, including dramatic growth in population and the introduction of the common law. These, amongst other factors, influenced the development of tenurial terms and structures, impacting upon the social, economic and legal status of the peasantry. This section will begin by considering the extent and impact of population change across this period, before analysing the manorial structures and the terms of tenure in each hundred and how they shaped, and were shaped by, population pressures, seigneurial interests and local environment.

2.2.1 Population change

There is broad agreement amongst historians that the population was rapidly increasing from the late eleventh to the late thirteenth centuries. However, debate continues over the magnitude of the population change; the levels of population at both points; the

capacity of the land to support the population; and whether it was still increasing on the eve of the Black Death.⁴⁴⁹ Estimates of the Domesday population range from around one million up to three million, whilst estimates of the population in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries vary from less than four million to nearly seven million.⁴⁵⁰ Most estimates of population increase over the two centuries after Domesday state that the population had at least doubled if not tripled, whilst others have suggested that it may have risen by up to four times by the mid-fourteenth century.⁴⁵¹ However, estimates for the late thirteenth century tend to either count forwards from Domesday or backwards from the 1377 poll tax, so are cyclically affected by the estimator's perceptions of the speed of population growth after Domesday and death rates in the Great Famine and the Black Death. As Postan warned, attempts at making firm population estimates involve the risk of errors 'on a truly heroic scale'.⁴⁵²

For Postan, it was not the actual size of the population that mattered, but rather its size in relation to other factors: the population could not continue to grow without limit. When population increase outstripped other resources, this would inevitably lead to checks on population growth such as famine, disease or reduced fertility. The

⁴⁴⁹ See for example: S.L. Thrupp, 'The Problem of Replacement-Rates in Late Medieval English Population' *EcHR*, 18 (1965), 101-19; *AHEW*, 511-2; Dyer, *Making*, 233-5; M. Bailey, 'Peasant Welfare in England, 1290-1348', *EcHR*, 51 (1998), 223-5; B.M.S. Campbell, 'Population pressure, inheritance and the land market in a fourteenth-century peasant community' in *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle*, ed. R.M. Smith (Cambridge, 1984), 87-134, 120; Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 147-155.

⁴⁵⁰ For a summary of historians' estimates see Campbell, *Seigniorial Agriculture*, 403. Other estimates not mentioned by Campbell include: 1.4-1.9 million in 1086 in A. Hinde, *England's Population, A History Since the Domesday Survey* (London, 2003), 18-19; around 2 million in 1086 in J.S. Moore, 'Quot homines? The population of Domesday England', *ANS*, 19 (1997), 307-34; about 2.5 million in 1086 in D.A. Hinton, 'Demography: from Domesday and beyond', *JMH*, 39, 2 (2013), 169-70. Hoskins suggested 4 million on the eve of the Black Death: W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955), 106; Dyer has argued that the population c.1300 cannot have been lower than 5 million: Dyer, *Standards*, 293-4. See also, Campbell, 'Population Pressure', 87; R.H. Britnell, 'Commercialization and Economic Development in England' in *A Commercialising Economy*, eds. R.H. Britnell, B.M.S. Campbell (Manchester, 1995), 10-11; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 28-33; E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: towns, commerce and crafts, 1086-1348* (London, 1995), 393-4.

⁴⁵¹ Campbell, 'Population Pressure', 87; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 29; Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 30-1.

⁴⁵² Postan, 'England', 561; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 30-1. See also: E.A. Kosminsky, 'The Evolution of Feudal Rent in England from the XIth to the XVth Centuries', *P&P*, 7 (1955), 21; *AHEW*, 508-9, 512-4.

population reached just such a critical level in the early fourteenth century, so that crises such as the Great Famine were inevitable, and served as a check from which the population never recovered; when plague hit it devastated a population that was already in decline.⁴⁵³ Others have argued that the Great Famine was no more than a temporary check, and it was only the catastrophe of plague that caused the population to decline in the long term.⁴⁵⁴

If Postan was correct, the late thirteenth-century peasantry was living on the edge of subsistence and potentially vulnerable even in years of good harvests. Postan's interpretation is convincing in the context of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, but the failure of the population to recover markedly during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when pressure on resources had been released, raises questions about its validity.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, many scholars have pointed out that land exhaustion, central to Postan's thesis,⁴⁵⁶ would have been highly variable. Settlement location was dependent on numerous factors, not just soil quality, and the fertility of the land could be improved rather than being an uncontrollable variable.⁴⁵⁷ Campbell's study of eastern Norfolk illustrated that soil exhaustion did not automatically follow from attempts to intensify agricultural production, and that in this

⁴⁵³ Postan, 'England', 563-4; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 35-8; Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 32-3.

⁴⁵⁴ Bailey suggested that Suffolk's population reached its peak in the 1340s: Bailey, *Suffolk*, 67-8. See also: Campbell, 'Population Pressure', 89-98; Razi, *Life, Marriage*, 45; Dyer, *Making*, 228-35, 246-51.

⁴⁵⁵ Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 56-63, 175-9.

⁴⁵⁶ Postan, 'England', 550-2; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 16-7, 20-8, 63-79.

⁴⁵⁷ B.F. Harvey, 'Introduction: the 'crisis' of the early fourteenth century' in *Before the Black Death: Studies in the 'Crisis' of the early fourteenth century*, ed. B.M.S. Campbell (Manchester, 1991), 9-12; M. Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin in the Medieval English Economy', *EcHR*, 42, 1 (1989), 5-7; C. Dyer, 'The Retreat from Marginal Land: the Growth and Decline of Medieval Rural Settlements' in *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England*, eds. M. Aston, D. Austin, C. Dyer (Oxford, 1989), 45-57; S. Rippon, 'Adaptation to a changing environment: the response of marshland communities to the late medieval 'crisis'', *Journal of Wetland Archaeology*, i (2001), 15-39.

region at least the land to population ratio had not reached crisis point at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁴⁵⁸

This study of three hundreds in different regions provides an opportunity to reconsider these problems. The Hundred Rolls are underutilised in population studies, not least because they do not cover the entire country. Moreover, limitations of the Hundred Rolls, including their failure to record all subtenancies and landless inhabitants, make them problematic for demographic studies. Nevertheless, they cover a wider area than manorial extents and penetrate deeper into society than other government records, so their potential usefulness should not be dismissed. Both Harley and John have used the Warwickshire Hundred Rolls to chart population change from Domesday to the late thirteenth century, and they found a surprising degree of variety, emphasising the importance of localised studies.⁴⁵⁹ Neither Harley nor John attempted to calculate the total size of the populations they studied in Warwickshire. Instead of applying multipliers, they simply compared the number of recorded peasants in Domesday with the number of recorded landholders in the Hundred Rolls.⁴⁶⁰ There are problems with this approach, but it seems reasonable as a means to chart population trends, if not absolute figures, and the same method will be followed here.

Unfortunately, the surviving copies of the Suffolk Hundred Rolls are fragmentary, so it is impossible to make direct quantitative comparisons between Blackbourn and the other two hundreds. Therefore, in this section population figures for the Cambridgeshire hundred of Staine will be utilised for comparison instead. Though they cannot be

⁴⁵⁸ B.M.S. Campbell, 'Agricultural Progress in Medieval England: Some Evidence from Eastern Norfolk', *EcHR*, 36, 1 (1983), 41-3.

⁴⁵⁹ Harley, 'Population Trends', 8-18; John, 'Population Change', 41-53.

⁴⁶⁰ Harley, 'Population Trends', 11; John, 'Population Change', 43-4.

considered representative of a wider region, there was extensive fragmentation of peasant holdings and small manors in Staine, like in parts of Blackbourn. The record for Lavendon in Bunsty Hundred is also fragmentary, and the returns for the borough of Olney do not survive. Otherwise, all of the settlements recorded in Domesday in Bunsty and Langtree also appear in the Hundred Rolls. Three hamlets, Filgrave and Eakley in Bunsty and Reach in Staine, were not described in Domesday but do appear in the thirteenth-century survey. Here it has been presumed that they were either new settlements, or that they were assessed with their associated villages, Tyringham, Stoke Goldington and Swaffham Prior, in Domesday.⁴⁶¹ If this was not the case and they were missed from Domesday entirely, then it must be borne in mind that the extent of population increase in these places will be exaggerated.

Between 1086 and 1279-80, the recorded population in Bunsty increased by close to two-and-a-half times. All vills saw an increase, from 35 percent in Lathbury to 367 percent in Little Linford. In Staine, the population increase was even more dramatic. In four of the six villages, the recorded population at least tripled between 1086 and 1280, and in Swaffham Prior it was five times as high by the later date. By contrast, Langtree hundred appears not to have experienced a dramatic increase in population.⁴⁶² In 1280, the number of recorded landholders was only 22 percent higher than it had been in 1086. Much of this increase came in the hamlet of Ipsden, where the recorded population increased by three-and-a-half times; excluding Ipsden, the population of the hundred increased by just 12 percent. In more than half of the vills the population either remained static or decreased.

⁴⁶¹ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 127.

⁴⁶² The population in Oxfordshire generally did not increase dramatically; even so, Langtree's stagnation was not typical. *AHEW*, 531-2.

Table 24 Heads of households recorded in Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls

Vill	Hundred	Domesday	Hundred Rolls	% change
Gayhurst	Bunsty	12	22	83.3
Hanslope	Bunsty	55	205	272.7
Haversham	Bunsty	29	45	55.2
Lathbury	Bunsty	29	39	34.5
Little Linford	Bunsty	6	28	366.7
Ravenstone	Bunsty	20	50	150.0
Stoke Goldington	Bunsty	15	47	213.3
Tyringham	Bunsty	34	49	44.1
Weston Underwood	Bunsty	19	41	115.8
Checkendon	Langtree	15	25	66.7
Crowmarsh Gifford	Langtree	27	27	0.0
Gatehampton	Langtree	16	10	-37.5
Goring	Langtree	33	32	-3.0
Ipsden	Langtree	11	38	245.5
Little Stoke	Langtree	10	10	0.0
Mapledurham Chaussy	Langtree	13	15	15.4
Mongewell	Langtree	23	21	-8.7
Newnham Murren	Langtree	32	23	-28.1
North Stoke	Langtree	43	57	32.6
Whitchurch	Langtree	32	53	65.6
Bottisham	Staine	51	147	188.2
Great Wilbraham	Staine	33	88.5	168.2
Little Wilbraham	Staine	21	76	261.9
Stow-cum-Quy	Staine	17	65	282.4
Swaffham Bulbeck	Staine	25	77	208.0
Swaffham Prior	Staine	20	105	425.0
Bunsty total		219	526	140.2
Langtree total		255	311	22.0
Staine total		167	558.5	234.4
Overall total		641	1,395.5	117.7

As the Hundred Rolls generally fail to record many temporary subtenancies,⁴⁶³ it is probable that the Langtree peasants' holdings were carved up and sublet to others and there is explicit evidence of this for Checkendon.⁴⁶⁴ Nonetheless, this failing is shared by the rolls for all of the hundreds, meaning that whilst the Langtree population is underrepresented, so too is the population in the other two hundreds, making the increase in these regions even more dramatic than the data suggests. The Bunsty

⁴⁶³ A problem shared with medieval surveys generally: Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 142-3.

⁴⁶⁴ TNA SC6/957/27. See below, 193-4.

Hundred Roll explicitly acknowledges some subtenancies that were not described in full,⁴⁶⁵ and there is evidence that some smallholders were left out of the record entirely.⁴⁶⁶ The greatest increase occurred in Staine hundred, but here it is clear that the Hundred Rolls do not record all subtenancies, as two of the jurors who acted in the 1279-80 inquiry and therefore should have been landholders at the time, were not assigned any land in the Hundred Rolls.⁴⁶⁷

It is possible that the population of Langtree hundred had reached its full potential by the late eleventh century.⁴⁶⁸ Most of Langtree's villas are so-called 'strip parishes', stretching from a narrow boundary with the Thames in the west, rising through to higher ground and woodland in the east. This terrain encouraged dispersed and relatively sparse settlement. In particular, it has been suggested that any settlements higher up the slopes and further from the Thames would have experienced difficulties with water supply, so the main concentrations of settlement were on the lower ground. This is not an entirely adequate explanation, however; some other villas in the Chilterns experienced similar stagnation over this period, but others saw a substantial increase in population.⁴⁶⁹ Whilst the terrain and the extent of woodland in this hundred would suggest that there was not much arable to go around, the average holding size in the Hundred Rolls was relatively large, ranging from approximately eight acres in Ipsden up to more than one virgate in Newnham Murren, suggesting that there was potential for growth in the area.

⁴⁶⁵ For example, John Peck 'and his tenants': *RH*, ii, 345a.

⁴⁶⁶ Below, 180.

⁴⁶⁷ Adam Chastain and Thomas Rust. *RH*, ii, 483b.

⁴⁶⁸ As argued for the nearby vill of Harpsden: *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 234. See also, D. Roden, 'Changing Settlement in the Chiltern Hills before 1850', *Folk Life*, 8, (1970), 61-4.

⁴⁶⁹ *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 8, 11, 200, 234, 270; Hepple, *The Chilterns*, 76-7.

It seems likely that Staine hundred was relatively sparsely populated in 1086, potentially explaining how it could absorb such a high population increase. The Domesday statistics are difficult to interpret, but in 1086 there were just 1.9 peasants per ploughland in Staine, as opposed to 2.5 in Langtree and 2.8 in Bunsty, implying that the existing arable in Staine could have supported a higher population. Moreover, in the Cambridgeshire fenlands there was plenty of room to expand the existing arable.⁴⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the fens were an important resource and no wide-scale drainage was undertaken in Staine during the medieval period;⁴⁷¹ the arable area is unlikely to have been much larger in the late thirteenth century than it had been in the late eleventh, though it was supporting a much larger population. It seems likely that the peasantry in Staine required less arable for subsistence than those in Langtree, because it lay in a more fertile area, and because the fens provided other sources of income.⁴⁷² The lodes cutting across Staine not only provided direct water routes between the rich fertile lands of south-east Cambridgeshire and the River Cam, but they also encouraged the growth of secondary settlements. Reach in Swaffham Prior was the most notable of these new settlements, becoming an important port by the early fourteenth century at the latest.⁴⁷³ By ensuring that the communities in Staine had easy access to trade routes the lodes helped to facilitate the expansion of population and settlement across this period.

There was also potential for expansion in the fertile valleys of the Great Ouse where Bunsty was situated. Though large, nucleated settlements would be expected, the hundred was instead characterised by relatively small and dispersed settlements because

⁴⁷⁰ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 31.

⁴⁷¹ Taylor, *Cambridgeshire*, 210-20; *Historical Monuments*, xxxii.

⁴⁷² For the importance of common resources and sources of employment for smallholders: Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 148-9; Dyer, *Standards*, 131-4; C. Dyer, 'Poverty and its relief in late medieval England', *P&P*, 216 (2012), 49; Dyer, *Making*, 159.

⁴⁷³ *Historical Monuments*, lxxv; Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, 452.

of the extent of woodland in the area.⁴⁷⁴ Williamson emphasised the importance of water-supply in shaping settlement, and argued that dispersed settlement could be supported in regions with a good water supply, like the boulder clays of northern Buckinghamshire.⁴⁷⁵ Rather than restricting population growth, the dispersed nature of the settlements, facilitated by the fertility of the arable, the woodland resources, and the good water-supply, may have encouraged the growth of new hamlets, and enabled the area to absorb a growing population.

The population density of this region was much greater than this data suggests, because the borough of Olney does not appear in the surviving returns. Olney remained a small, unimportant borough, but it could have been significant in a local context, and like other urban or partly-urbanised settlements it is likely to have been relatively densely populated.⁴⁷⁶ An extent from 1284 survives for the manor of Olney, describing its division between four co-heirs.⁴⁷⁷ The extent mentions 184 individuals, an increase of 441 percent when compared with the thirty-four peasants in the Domesday vill. It is highly unlikely that this extent provides a comprehensive list of all those holding in the borough, so it is possible that the population increase was even more pronounced here.

In Blackburn double-hundred the surviving copies of the Hundred Rolls are only full enough to comment on population for one vill. For Stanton the surviving entries mention 182 individuals, an increase of nearly two-and-a-half times compared to the seventy-six peasants in Domesday. It would be unwise to extrapolate this increase to the rest of Blackburn, because discussion of the other hundreds has shown that variety

⁴⁷⁴ Lewis, Mitchell-Fox, Dyer, *Village*, 57; Lewis, 'Medieval Rural Settlement', 96; Foard, 'Medieval Woodland', 62.

⁴⁷⁵ Williamson, *Environment*, 190-5.

⁴⁷⁶ Britnell, 'Commercialization', 9-10.

⁴⁷⁷ CCR, 1279-88, 289-94; see also: TNA C133/40/11, calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 545.

could be dramatic even within the same hundred; it is likely to have been even more so in a hundred the size of Blackbourn, with such variable terrain. Stanton lies within the High Suffolk region of Blackbourn, so one would have expected population increase to be high in this vill, as it typically was in Suffolk as a whole. By contrast, Bailey has suggested that the Suffolk Brecklands were an anciently settled part of England, which had reached its arable potential prior to the Conquest, so population growth was restrained in this area.⁴⁷⁸ Nonetheless, using the 1327 lay subsidy, he showed that Blackbourn as a whole was more densely populated by this date than it had been in 1086.⁴⁷⁹

A Population ‘Crisis’?

Holding size and standards of living will be explored in more detail below, but they also need to be mentioned here in the context of the suggested population ‘crisis’ of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The population increase was most rapid in Staine, but this hundred was relatively sparsely populated in 1086 and had more room and resources to absorb the burgeoning population. This is not entirely satisfactory, because there seems to have been some room for expansion in Langtree hundred too.⁴⁸⁰ In 1279-80, 74 percent of the Langtree tenantry held virgate or part virgate holdings. In contrast, over 60 percent of the landholders in Staine held five acres or less, at a time when it has been estimated a minimum of seven and a half acres was required for subsistence.⁴⁸¹ This is a higher proportion than Dyer’s estimate for the country as a whole, as he suggested that 50 percent of the population did not hold enough land to support a family.⁴⁸² Due to differences in acre size, soil quality and resources in each

⁴⁷⁸ Bailey, *Marginal*, 114-5, 136-8.

⁴⁷⁹ Bailey, *Suffolk*, maps 6-8.

⁴⁸⁰ Hepple, *The Chilterns*, 71.

⁴⁸¹ J.Z. Titow, *English Rural Society, 1200-1350* (London, 1969), 78-81.

⁴⁸² Dyer, ‘Poverty’, 43.

place a direct comparison is not possible, but these figures suggest that the Staine peasants would have been much more vulnerable to bad harvests, fluctuating prices and diseases than those in Langtree. One would expect that on average the peasants of Staine would have been poorer than those in Langtree. However, if the amounts collected for Staine and Langtree in the subsidy of 1334 are compared to the recorded population in the Hundred Rolls, the amounts collected per head were about the same in each hundred.⁴⁸³ This reveals nothing about distribution of wealth, and the time difference between the two sources is problematic, but it does suggest that, despite their much smaller holdings, as a whole the Staine peasants were not necessarily worse off than their Langtree counterparts.

As Campbell has shown in Coltishall and Martham, Norfolk, those with smallholdings of a few acres could show high economic and demographic resilience.⁴⁸⁴ The supposedly vulnerable population in Staine hundred appears to have been no more vulnerable to the demographic traumas of the fourteenth century than Langtree, for the poll tax of 1377 suggests that population decrease had actually been more pronounced in Langtree.⁴⁸⁵ This fits with Bailey's finding that those settlements with large customary holdings and restrictions on sales and subletting before the Black Death, tended not to have a pool of reserve tenants to replace those who died during the pestilence.⁴⁸⁶ In Langtree, certain settlements were dramatically reduced by 1377: the hamlet of Gatehampton was absorbed into Goring and the population of Mongewell was

⁴⁸³ Staine hundred paid £41 14s 0d, 17.9d per recorded landholder in the Hundred Rolls. Langtree hundred paid £22 15s 6d, 17.6d per head. *Lay Subsidy of 1334*, ed. R.E. Glasscock (London, 1975), 24, 243.

⁴⁸⁴ Campbell, 'Population Pressure', 98-9; B.M.S. Campbell, 'Population Change and the Genesis of Commonfields on a Norfolk Manor', *EcHR*, 33, 2, (1980), 191-2.

⁴⁸⁵ The Poll Tax records 675 people in Langtree in 1377, 117% more than the 311 in the HR. In Staine the returns of 1377 record 1,285 people, 130% more than the 558.5 in the HR. *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381*, ed. C.C. Fenwick, i, 73; ii, 295.

⁴⁸⁶ Bailey, *Serfdom*, 134, 320.

devastated.⁴⁸⁷ In both cases, there is evidence of more long-term decline, as the population in both settlements was shrinking even before the Hundred Rolls were compiled. That some decline is evident before 1279 suggests that Langtree's population was not reaching its peak or reaching crisis point around 1300.⁴⁸⁸ So even though demographic developments were dramatically different in Staine and Langtree, the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century 'crisis' cannot be identified in either of them. High population may have contributed to other problems, but it was experienced differently in different regions and at different times, rather than converging into a general crisis at this point.

The above discussion has emphasised the variety in population change across and within these hundreds, and suggested some environmental reasons for the divergence in each place. Though the environment was important in influencing settlement patterns, these factors should not be considered in a vacuum. The intrusiveness of lordship and the status of the peasantry could also be influential in determining whether a settlement could expand or holdings could fragment to absorb an increasing population.⁴⁸⁹ This will be explored in the next section.

2.2.2 Manorial structures, 1279-80

Manorial structures could drastically affect the social, economic and political development of a region. Large classical manors held by important lords would inevitably have been governed differently to small manors in divided vills that were

⁴⁸⁷ K.J. Allison, *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire* (Leicester, 1965), 41; M. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (Stroud, 1998), 380-1.

⁴⁸⁸ As Roden suggested for certain Chiltern vills: Roden, 'Changing Settlement', 64.

⁴⁸⁹ Dyer, *Making*, 160; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 43; Kosminsky, 'Feudal Rent', 21-2. See also Dyer, *Standards*, 5-7; Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 66-120.

held by lords of just local significance.⁴⁹⁰ Lords of smaller manors tended to keep a higher proportion of their land in demesne and, as they had fewer tenants, their income would be more reliant on production than rents.⁴⁹¹ Regions of weak manorialisation, where most villis were split between numerous manors and lords were less exacting, have been characterised as areas of social and economic individualism, and they often exhibited greater economic development.⁴⁹²

Kosminsky's monumental study of thirteenth-century manorial structures covers the regions surveyed in the surviving Hundred Rolls, supplemented by *IPMs* and some other manorial and governmental records.⁴⁹³ Kosminsky has been criticised for his Marxist interpretations of lord-peasant relationships, and he himself acknowledged the problems of relying upon fragmentary records that describe a relatively homogenous region of southern England.⁴⁹⁴ Nonetheless, his conclusions about the relationship of demesne land to free and unfree tenant land and the variability in manorial structures have been influential.

The focus of this study on three hundreds enables a reconsideration of Kosminsky's work in a local context. Kosminsky emphasised the importance of class conflict and the different priorities of lords and peasants in influencing the development of landholding structures,⁴⁹⁵ but this gives the opportunity to reassess in terms of different landscapes and demographic pressures as well. Kosminsky did not analyse Blackburn hundred

⁴⁹⁰ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 27-8; Schofield, *Peasant*, 47-50.

⁴⁹¹ Dyer, *Making*, 151; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 100-1.

⁴⁹² Bailey, *Suffolk*, 27.

⁴⁹³ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 1-67.

⁴⁹⁴ R. de Roover, 'Review: *Agrarian History*, By E.A. Kosminsky', *American History Review*, 47, 5 (1957), 710-2; Postan, 'England', 606; Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 77-8, 107, 112-3.

⁴⁹⁵ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 151, 328-31. See also: R. Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', *P&P*, 70 (1976), 31-9, 48. For problems with the Marxist emphasis on class relations see Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 95-120.

because the Suffolk rolls are fragmentary and only survive as later copies, but an attempt to incorporate data for this hundred is made in the below analysis.

Kosminsky divided the arable land into three broad categories: demesne, free land and villein land. Across his data as a whole, he found that 32 percent of the arable was demesne, 40 percent villein and 28 percent free.⁴⁹⁶ He acknowledged that these totals were heavily skewed by his reliance on material from Oxfordshire where the amount of villein land was relatively high, and hypothesised that villein land would have been less significant elsewhere.⁴⁹⁷

The three categories are not always clear cut and it is particularly difficult to distinguish between large freeholdings and small demesnes.⁴⁹⁸ Both the ‘free’ and ‘villein’ categories group different types of tenure under one umbrella, such as temporary leases and land held in free alms all under free land. The layout of the Bunsty material means that it is sometimes difficult to work out the extent of demesne land because the total given in the rolls also takes account of the villein land. Inevitably, these difficulties mean that there is some variety between Kosminsky’s figures and those presented in this study, but any variety is slight. In the below analysis, ‘unfree’ is preferred to ‘villein’ because a variety of terms are included in that categorisation. Two hamlets in Bunsty, Eakley and Filgrave, are excluded because of problems calculating their demesne; Lavendon has also been left out because the entry for this vill is incomplete.

⁴⁹⁶ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 90-1.

⁴⁹⁷ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 204.

⁴⁹⁸ For further exploration of these problems: Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 87-9; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 44-5.

Bunsty and Langtree

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire have both been considered manorialised counties; thus, if ‘typical’ manors are to be found anywhere, one would expect them in these counties. Table 25 summarises Kosminsky’s findings, and shows that in both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and in Kosminsky’s data as a whole, free land accounted for a smaller proportion of the arable than unfree or demesne land, one of the features that would be expected in a classical manor.⁴⁹⁹

Table 25 Kosminsky’s Analysis of manorial structures: A Summary

Kosminsky's Data	Demesne		Unfree		Free		Total Acres
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	
Buckinghamshire	13,521	33	14,524	35	13,088	32	41,133
Oxfordshire	73,900	31	101,088	42	62,138	26	237,125
Whole Material	174,154	32	221,309	40	151,594	28	547,047

Both Langtree and Bunsty are unusual in the context of their respective counties, as both contained more free land than unfree or demesne land. Langtree was one of only three of the thirteen Oxfordshire hundreds analysed by Kosminsky that had more free land than unfree land, the other two being Pyrton and Ewelme. It is no coincidence that these are all Chiltern hundreds situated in the same region and containing similar landscape challenges. This forcefully suggests that any comparison of landholding structures must take into account environmental factors. Bunsty also had the lowest proportion of villein land of any of the four Buckinghamshire hundreds that Kosminsky analysed. The terrain in both Langtree and Bunsty encouraged dispersed settlement, which often led to looser manorial organisation and resulted in freeholdings being proportionately more significant than unfree holdings.

⁴⁹⁹ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 130-1; Bailey, *English Manor*, 6-7.

Table 26 Analysis of manorial structures: Bunsty Hundred

Vill	Land type	Hides	Virgates	Acres	Calc. Acres	% of vill
Haversham	Demesne			422		45.4
	Unfree			288		31.0
	Free			219.5		23.6
	Total			929.5		-
Little Linford	Demesne			100		40.5
	Unfree			110		44.5
	Free			37		15.0
	Total			247		-
Stoke Goldington	Demesne			251.5		46.2
	Unfree			42		7.7
	Free			251		46.1
	Total			544.5		-
Tyringham	Demesne			120		29.4
	Unfree			212.5		52.1
	Free			75.75		18.6
	Total			408.25		-
Ravenstone	Demesne			98		16.8
	Unfree			390		66.9
	Free			95		16.3
	Total			583		-
Hanslope	Demesne			1,245.5		36.4
	Unfree			611.5		17.9
	Free			1,562		45.7
	Total			3,419		-
Weston Underwood	Demesne	5	0	0	320	40.4
	Unfree	0	4	0	64	8.1
	Free	0	21.5	65	409	51.6
	Total	5	25.5	65	793	-
Gayhurst	Demesne	1	0		64	19.5
	Unfree	0.5	8.5		168	51.2
	Free		6		96	29.3
	Total	1.5	14.5		328	-
Lathbury	Demesne	3	2	155.5	379.5	37.4
	Unfree	0	14	0	224	22.1
	Free	0.5	20	60	412	40.6
	Total	3.5	36	215.5	1,015.5	-
Total	Demesne	9	2	2,392.50	3,000.5	36.3
	Unfree	0.5	26.5	1,654.00	2,110	25.5
	Free	0.5	47.5	2,365.25	3,157.25	38.2
	Total	10	76	6,411.75	8,267.75	-

Table 27 Analysis of manorial structures: Langtree Hundred

Vill	Land type	Carucates /Hides	Virgates	Acres	Calc. Carucates	% of vill
Checkendon & Little Stoke	Demesne	4	0	0	4.00	38.0
	Unfree	0	16	0	4.00	38.0
	Free	1	6	2	2.52	24.0
	Total	5	22	2	10.52	-
Crowmarsh Gifford	Demesne	0	9	0	2.25	37.5
	Unfree	0	7.5	0	1.88	31.3
	Free	0	7.5	0	1.88	31.3
	Total	0	24	0	6.00	-
Gatehampton	Demesne	1	0	0	1.00	30.8
	Unfree	0	2.5	0	0.63	19.2
	Free	1	2.5	0	1.63	50.0
	Total	2	5	0	3.25	-
Goring	Demesne	2	0	0	2.00	18.4
	Unfree	0	1	0	0.25	2.3
	Free	4	17.5	22	8.60	79.3
	Total	6	18.5	22	10.85	-
Ipsden	Demesne	2	0	0	2.00	38.8
	Unfree	0	9.5	16	2.54	49.2
	Free	0	2	12	0.62	12.0
	Total	2	11.5	28	5.16	-
Mapledurham	Demesne	2	0	0	2.00	44.4
	Unfree	0	4	0	1.00	22.2
	Free	0	6	0	1.50	33.3
	Total	2	10	0	4.50	-
Mongewell	Demesne	2	3	0	2.75	34.9
	Unfree	0	9	0	2.25	28.6
	Free	1	7.5	0	2.88	36.5
	Total	3	19.5	0	7.88	-
Newnham Murren	Demesne	2	0	0	2.00	23.0
	Unfree	0	0	1.5	0.02	0.2
	Free	0	26.33	8	6.66	76.8
	Total	2	26.33	9.5	8.68	-
North Stoke	Demesne	3	0	0	3.00	22.5
	Unfree	0	23.25	0	5.81	43.7
	Free	3	6	0	4.50	33.8
	Total	6	29.25	0	13.31	-
Whitchurch	Demesne	2	0	0	2.00	23.5
	Unfree	0	14	54	4.04	47.6
	Free	0	9.5	8	2.46	28.9
	Total	2	23.5	62	8.50	-
Total	Demesne	20	12.00	0	23.00	29.3
	Unfree	0	86.75	71.5	22.40	28.5
	Free	10	90.83	52	33.23	42.3
	Total	30	189.58	123.5	78.63	-

One would expect population increase to be greater in a hundred with more free land, as freeholdings were more likely to fragment to absorb it.⁵⁰⁰ However, as shown above, population change in these two hundreds was drastically different, with Bunsty experiencing a high increase and Langtree's population stagnating across the two centuries after Domesday. Both regions contained woodland, both were on major rivers, both were characterised by dispersed rather than nucleated settlement, and both contained more free than unfree land, but the two hundreds developed differently. Manorial structures were more established in Langtree, as most of the manors retained their basic shape between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls. It is thus possible that seigneurial control was tighter in this hundred, potentially limiting the extent to which population growth could be absorbed within existing structures. This explanation seems inadequate however, because there were actually more peasants holding unfree land than free land in this hundred: unfree holdings had fragmented, whilst most freeholdings were large and undivided. Instead the differences may in part be due to differences in the environment. In both hundreds, the landscape encouraged dispersed settlement, looser ties and greater freedom. However, though Langtree shared many features with Bunsty, it had a much lower capacity for expansion. The higher lands in Langtree had poor water supplies and were difficult to settle, whilst much of Bunsty was rich and fertile. Though some of the seigneurial structures in these two hundreds initially seem similar, differences in the environment meant that they developed in different ways across the two centuries after Domesday, so neither lordship structures nor landscape challenges should be considered in isolation.⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰⁰ Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents', 598; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 163-4; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 43.

⁵⁰¹ Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 237-40; Dyer, *Lords*, 374-6; Dyer, *Standards*, 118-39; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 81; Campbell, 'Population Change', 174, 182.

These broad environmental explanations are not satisfactory in every case, as there was variety from settlement to settlement, and some vills in each hundred actually contained more unfree than free land. Differences may have been influenced by the identity of the lord, and whether they had other land and resources elsewhere.⁵⁰² Kosminsky showed that the size of the manor was particularly important. Large manors (containing more than 1,000 acres) had proportionately smaller demesnes, less free land and large amounts of unfree land. Small manors (less than 500 acres), had proportionately larger demesnes and more free land.⁵⁰³

Thus, the high proportion of free land in Langtree and Bunsty may have been a function of the fact that there were few large manors. Three manors in Langtree were large manors by Kosminsky's categorisation: Checkendon with Little Stoke, held by John Marmion; Goring, held by Hugh Druval; and North Stoke, held by John de Rivers. These three lords were not particularly important in a national context. Rivers received North Stoke as one of three co-heirs of his great-aunt Philippa Basset; Philippa had made an excellent first marriage to Henry, earl of Warwick, but as one of three inheriting daughters of a relatively small tenant-in-chief, her own estates were not particularly great.⁵⁰⁴ John Marmion was the head of a cadet branch of the important Marmion family, and his line had held Checkendon with Little Stoke for generations.⁵⁰⁵ The Druvals had held Goring as subtenants of the honour of Wallingford since at least c.1154, but it seems to have been their only manor.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰² Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 100-1.

⁵⁰³ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 99-103.

⁵⁰⁴ Sanders, *Baronies*, 5-6, 51-2; N. Vincent, 'Basset, Thomas (d. 1220)', *ODNB*; P. Coss, 'Basset, Philippa, countess of Warwick (d. 1265)', *ODNB*; Mason, 'Earldom of Warwick', 71-4; D. Crouch, 'The Last Adventure of Richard Siward', *Morgannwg*, 35 (1991), 10-1, 20-4.

⁵⁰⁵ *Boarstall*, 1-3, 21-6.

⁵⁰⁶ *VCH Oxfordshire*, ii, 103-4; *Goring Charters*, xl; *RBE*, 309.

The proportion of unfree land in North Stoke and Checkendon was higher than the mean for the hundred as a whole: 44 percent in North Stoke and 38 percent in Checkendon. This would be expected with large manors. However, the data for Goring fails to conform: only 2 percent of this manor's arable was unfree, whilst free land represented nearly 80 percent. Goring was the Druval's only manor, so it was the only land they had to use for patronage. Previous generations had made grants to cadet branches and religious houses, resulting in several large freeholdings. Nonetheless, whilst this can account for a greater amount of free tenures, the percentage on this manor still seems particularly high. In Bunsty, only one manor contained over 1,000 acres, and, like Goring, this manor did not conform to Kosminsky's model. Hanslope, held by William de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, contained over 2,300 acres. Nearly half of this was held in free tenures, whilst only 17 percent was unfree.

Of the twenty-seven hundreds Kosminsky analysed, he identified both Bunsty and Langtree as two of six hundreds that failed to follow his model regarding proportions of land.⁵⁰⁷ It is significant that two other anomalous hundreds, Pyrton, Oxfordshire, and Stodfold, Buckinghamshire, were situated relatively close to Langtree and Bunsty respectively, and shared some of the physical features of the landscape.

Blackbourn

The extent of abbreviation in the copies of the Suffolk Hundred Rolls means that Kosminsky's methodology is not feasible for Blackbourn. However, some analysis of the lands that pertained to St Edmunds' fee is possible. The findings may not be

⁵⁰⁷ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 100-2. The other hundreds were: Whittlesford (Cam.), Stodfold (Bucks.), Pyrton (Oxon.), Stoneleigh (War.).

common to the rest of the hundred, or even be representative of the abbot's fee because of omissions, but at least the general structure can be discerned.

Table 28 shows a breakdown of all the lands which pertained to the abbot's barony in the surviving entries for Blackbourn double-hundred.

Table 28 Analysis of land type on the abbot of St Edmunds' fee in Blackbourn double-hundred

Land type	Arable Acreage	% of lands that pertain to abbot
Demesne (Abbot)	1,736.0	12.6
Demesne (Other lords from the abbot)	2,207.5	16.0
Total Demesne	3,943.5	28.5
Unfree	3,803.0	27.5
Free	6,073.5	43.9
Total	13,820.0	-

East Anglia is generally considered to have been a relatively free society, so high percentages of free land would be expected.⁵⁰⁸ Of the data collected for Blackbourn, 44 percent of the arable was free land, and 28 percent unfree, so the prevalence of freedom in this hundred was not as dramatic as would be expected. However, though Bailey has estimated that free land made up 80 percent of the tenanted land in thirteenth-century Suffolk, he also showed that western Suffolk, where Blackbourn was situated, was more manorialised and had more unfree land than the rest of the county.⁵⁰⁹ The environmental challenges of the Breckland region may have led to different developments in this part of Suffolk. Moreover, Blackbourn was dominated by one large landlord, the abbot of St Edmunds, so was also atypical in terms of lordship structures in this county.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ See for example, Bailey, *Suffolk*, 8, 12-3; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 164-5; Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 204.

⁵⁰⁹ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 50.

⁵¹⁰ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 31-3, 75-7.

Some further indication of manorial structures in this region can be gained from other surviving records. The extents compiled for the *IPM* of William de Criketot who died in 1299 are particularly full, and they provide an opportunity to consider the structure of two manors unconnected with the abbot's fee.⁵¹¹ William was one of the heirs to the Blund barony when his uncle William Blund died at Lewes.⁵¹² In Blackbourn, he held the manor of Ashfield, which extended into both Great and Little Ashfield, and half the manor of Ixworth, the other half of which was held by his cousin Robert de Valognes.

Table 29 Analysis of manorial structures on William de Criketot's two Blackbourn manors

Manor	Land type	Arable Acreage	% of manor
Ashfield	Demesne	360.0	24.9
	Unfree	547.0	37.8
	Free	539.0	37.3
	Total	1,446.0	-
Ixworth	Demesne	221.5	43.6
	Unfree	164.0	32.3
	Free	122.5	24.1
	Total	508.0	-
Total	Demesne	581.5	29.8
	Unfree	711.0	36.4
	Free	661.5	33.9
	Total	1,954.0	-

Table 29 shows the breakdown of William de Criketot's two Blackbourn manors by land type. These results are not representative of what would be expected in Suffolk. It has been stated that small manors were predominant in this region, but Ashfield was a large manor of over 1,000 acres, and Ixworth was a medium-sized manor. Moreover, both had a higher proportion of unfree land than free land.

However, Criketot was arguably not a typical Suffolk lord. Though his interests were predominantly local, they were still more extensive than many other local lords.

⁵¹¹ TNA C133/89/8; calendared at *CIPM*, iii, 537.

⁵¹² Sanders, *Baronies*, 3-4.

Moreover, whilst fragmentation and subinfeudation had weakened some manorial structures elsewhere, the large Ashfield manor had been kept in hand by the Blund family and covered a similar area to the lands held by Robert Blund in Domesday. Ixworth had been recently divided, but both parts were kept in hand by Blund's descendants. Remains of a twelfth-century castle have been discovered in Great Ashfield, suggesting that this manor was central to the Blund barony, and that the Blunds and their descendant William de Criketot may have been resident lords.⁵¹³ The stability of lordship on these manors and the status of their lord seem to have eased the pressures which acted on other Suffolk manors, leading to fragmentation and weaker control. Significantly, these manors show that the freedom of Suffolk's society should not be taken for granted. The evidence for the abbot's fee suggests that there probably was more free than unfree land in Blackbourn overall, but not by a great margin, and the manorial structures were variable in this county, as they were elsewhere.

Ecclesiastical Manors

It has been suggested that ecclesiastical landlords were more likely to possess large manors with a high proportion of villein land.⁵¹⁴ The church held 26 percent of the manors in Kosminsky's sample; these contained 31 percent of the arable, but 37 percent of the villein land.⁵¹⁵ Peculiarities of ecclesiastical estates have been associated with the greater stability of tenure enjoyed by institutions, which would be unaffected by minorities, lack of heirs and divided inheritance.⁵¹⁶ Kosminsky was unconvinced, however, that ecclesiastical estates had distinct characteristics, instead arguing that

⁵¹³ Above, 94-5.

⁵¹⁴ Postan, 'England', 577-8; Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 109, 169; Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents', 593, 607.

⁵¹⁵ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 109.

⁵¹⁶ Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents', 593, 597, 601; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 100-2.

ecclesiastical landlords tended to hold more large manors, which tended to have more villein land whether they were held by an ecclesiastical or a lay lord.⁵¹⁷

The prior of Ravenstone's manor in Bunsty was small, but in other ways resembles a typical ecclesiastical manor. It contained just 274 acres, and 57 percent of the arable was held in unfree tenures. However, the abbot of Lavendon's manor in the same hundred was also small (290 acres) but had a large proportion of free land (43 percent), more typical of manors in the rest of the hundred, than of ecclesiastical manors elsewhere.

Phillips' estimates of the total arable on Bury St Edmunds' manor of Hinderclay suggest a high proportion of villein land: 39 percent of the arable on this 930 acre manor.⁵¹⁸ However, using the Hundred Rolls returns for Bury's manor of Stanton, which are particularly full, it can be estimated that over 80 percent of the arable on this large manor (nearly 1,300 acres) was held in free tenures. These examples in Bunsty and Blackbourn show that there was as much variety in ecclesiastical manors as there was in lay manors, rather than there being a typical ecclesiastical manorial structure.

The ecclesiastical manors in Bunsty and Blackbourn support Kosminsky's observation that manorial structure was not influenced by ecclesiastical lordship *per se*. Nevertheless, there may still have been differences in how lordship was actually experienced.⁵¹⁹ Ravenstone and Lavendon were small, local houses that were situated within Bunsty hundred. Thus, they were resident lords, able to exploit their demesne

⁵¹⁷ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 109-13 142-3, 169; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 434-6; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 32-3.

⁵¹⁸ Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 95-6.

⁵¹⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, 12, 136.

lands and oversee their peasant tenants directly.⁵²⁰ St Edmunds was much more important in a national context than these other houses, but the Blackbourn manors were still relatively local. This may have impacted how much pressure was exerted upon the peasantry and how intrusive lordship was on these manors.

Manorial Structures: Conclusions

Langtree and Bunsty definitely, and Blackbourn probably, contained more free land than unfree land in 1279-80. This would have been expected in Suffolk but less so in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire; however, as shown above, Langtree and Bunsty fell within regions of their respective counties where settlement was dispersed and manors were relatively small, both features that were generally accompanied by a high proportion of free land. By contrast, Bailey has shown that north-west Suffolk was the most manorialised and least free region of Suffolk. The terrain encouraged mixed settlement patterns with some nucleation, as opposed to the dispersed settlement patterns elsewhere in the county. Moreover, though there was manorial fragmentation and small manors in this region, the dominance of Bury St Edmunds prevented this developing to the same degree as elsewhere.⁵²¹ The data gathered from Blackbourn double-hundred suggests that there was more free than unfree land, but that free land did not have the same dominance in Blackbourn as it did in much of the rest of Suffolk. What emerges from the discussion above is the amount of variety across and within each hundred. Patterns, influenced by the landscape, manorial size and demographic pressures can be observed, but in each hundred there are anomalous examples and unexplained variations.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 105.

⁵²¹ Bailey, 'Villeinage', 434-6; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 32-5.

⁵²² Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 97-9.

The amount of free land in these hundreds suggests that the focus that some historians have placed on the significance of serfdom and its disabilities may have been overstated.⁵²³ As Hatcher and Bailey have pointed out, the extent of free land and the importance of other forms of seigneurial income, make Marxist interpretations that focus on class-conflict and the disabilities of villeinage as the determining factors in economic development 'self-evidently flawed'.⁵²⁴ However, though valuable for providing a general picture, the above analysis reveals little about the actual experience of the peasantry. The relative proportions of free and unfree land are irrelevant unless also considered in the context of the number of peasants, the relative burden attached to each type of holding and the potential stigma of unfree status.⁵²⁵ The terms of tenure and holding-size of the peasantry, will be considered in the next section, to establish the relative burdens placed upon the peasantry in these three hundreds.

2.2.3 Terms of tenure and status

In surveys, peasants tended to be defined by the legal status of their tenement, which did not necessarily reflect their personal status.⁵²⁶ Theoretically, unfree peasants in the thirteenth century held their lands at their lord's will and the rents, services and other payments owed could vary accordingly. They had no legal right to inherit land, and could not own chattels or accumulate other lands in their own right, and they could not sue in the king's courts. They were not allowed to leave their manor, and women owed payments to marry and for having children out of wedlock.⁵²⁷ Thus, it is unsurprising

⁵²³ For example: Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 319-59; Kosminsky, 'Feudal Rent', 18-22, 24; Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure', 31, 37; Hilton, 'Freedom', 3-19.

⁵²⁴ Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 99-100; Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 6-7; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 432-4, 454. It has, however, been suggested that Hatcher underestimated the extent of servile land: Z. Razi, 'Serfdom and Freedom in Medieval England: A Reply to the Revisionists', *P&P*, 195 (2007), 182-7.

⁵²⁵ Postan, 'England', 610-1; Hyams, *Kings*, 268; Dyer, *Standards*, 275; Dyer, 'Ineffectiveness of Lordship', 85-6.

⁵²⁶ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-3.

⁵²⁷ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-7; Dyer, 'Memories', 278; Bailey, *English Manor*, 28-33.

that villeinage has been viewed as a burdensome state.⁵²⁸ However, the disabilities of villeinage should not be overstated. In reality, villeins could inherit land and did own chattels. The extent to which merchet and other incidents of villeinage were enforced varied from manor to manor, as did the relative burden of labour services and rents.⁵²⁹

Hatcher has contended that in certain circumstances, aspects of unfreedom could in fact be beneficial. Whilst free tenants with large holdings and low rents were undoubtedly better off, some free tenants with smallholdings or holding by new or short-term leases were at the mercy of their lords and market forces.⁵³⁰ Freedom of movement would have been less important during the thirteenth century, when high population densities meant that opportunities to acquire land or find employment were limited, so even free tenants were economically bound to their holdings.⁵³¹ A lack of land, not unfreedom, was the main cause of poverty during this period,⁵³² and Kanzaka's statistical study of the Hundred Rolls showed that freeholdings were smaller on average than unfree holdings, because there were fewer forces preventing fragmentation of free tenements.⁵³³ Dyer has challenged Hatcher's arguments, stating that freedom was viewed by contemporaries, and should be viewed by us, as a beneficial state, primarily because of the certainty of free obligations and their generally low level.⁵³⁴ Razi has

⁵²⁸ See for example: Hilton, *Bond Men*, 56-61, 156-7; R.H. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History* (London, 1985), 140-1; R. Brenner, 'The rises and declines of serfdom in medieval and early modern Europe' in *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. M.L. Bush (London, 1996), 261-5; Razi, 'Serfdom', 185-7.

⁵²⁹ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 128-32; Bailey, *English Manor*, 28-9; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 451; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 16-18, 38; Dyer, 'Memories', 284-5; Dyer, 'Ineffectiveness of Lordship', 74-5.

⁵³⁰ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 10, 14-21; M.M. Postan and J. Hatcher, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in pre-Industrial Europe: Population and Class Relations in Feudal Society', *P&P*, 78, 1 (1978), 31-5. See also: J.A. Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility: studies in the social history of the Mediaeval English village* (Toronto, 1964), 81-93, 205; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 431, 451-2.

⁵³¹ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 30.

⁵³² Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 25.

⁵³³ Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents', 598.

⁵³⁴ Dyer, *Standards*, 137-8.

argued that Hatcher underestimated the extent of unfree land in the country as a whole, and the burden and stigma of unfreedom.⁵³⁵

These arguments will be considered in the context of the three case study hundreds. Tenurial terms varied, depending upon the level of manorialisation, population pressure, holding size and the identity of the lord, amongst other factors. Hence it is important to consider terms of tenure in a local context, so relative burdens can be established between free and unfree tenants who shared the same advantages and difficulties in lordship, landscape and demographic pressures.

Bunsty

Dodwell's analysis of the free tenantry in the Hundred Rolls showed that Bunsty contained the largest free element in the surviving Buckinghamshire Hundred Rolls.⁵³⁶ On average, the free tenants in this hundred held more land than the unfree peasants, and rendered relatively less for it. However, over two thirds of freeholdings were the same size or smaller than the modal villein holding in their vill, so relative renders rather than holding size would have marked the greatest distinction between free and unfree.

The Bunsty Hundred Roll describes the unfree lands in the same way for each manor.

For example in Hanslope:

[The jurors] say that the lord William de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, holds the whole manor of Hanslope... And he has there in demesne 1,206 acres whereof in villeinage [there are] 400.5 acres, of which Robert Norman holds in villeinage 18 acres...⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Razi, 'Serfdom', 182-7. See also: Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure', 48, 72-3; Hilton, *Class Conflict*, 140-1.

⁵³⁶ B. Dodwell, 'The Free Tenantry of the Hundred Rolls', *EcHR*, 14, 2 (1944), 168.

⁵³⁷ *RH*, ii, 344a.

The rest of the villein tenants are then listed. Recording the villeinage as a proportion of the demesne emphasises just how closely these tenants were tied to their lord and draws a clear contrast with the free tenants whose acreage was treated separately.⁵³⁸

The Hundred Rolls record 240 tenants *in villenagio* in Bunsty in 1279-80. Ten of these held in Lavendon and have not been included in calculations because the entries for this vill are incomplete. Table 30 is divided into two parts: the top part shows the villein holdings in the vills where they were described in acres, and the bottom part shows the holdings in the four vills where virgates were used. This is because virgate size varied in this hundred, so it was deemed representative to use the actual measurements provided in the Hundred Rolls. However, the total converts the virgates to acres, presuming sixteen acres per virgate. Villeins made up 45 percent of the Bunsty population and held 39 percent of the tenanted lands. There was variety across vills, but within each vill there was general uniformity in acreage. The modal holding size was nine acres, occurring forty-two times in Hanslope and thirty-two times in Haversham. Six or twelve acre holdings were also common, occurring in four different vills.

Holding size was by no means the only determinant of living standards; much also depended on the quality of the land, and on the nature and scale of rents owed in respect of that land.⁵³⁹ In the Bunsty Hundred Roll, a total render for each villein holding is recorded, encapsulating rents, works, other services and aids. This varied from place to place, from a mean render per acre of 9½d in Tyringham, up to 25½d in Eakley.

⁵³⁸ See F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge, 1968), i, 363; Hyams, *Kings*, 18.

⁵³⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, 110-8, 184-5.

Nonetheless, 63 percent of the villeins in the seven villis described in acres owed within $1\frac{1}{2}d$ of the mean render of $16\frac{1}{2}d$ per acre.

Table 30 Villein Holdings in the Hundred Rolls: Bunsty Hundred

Vill	Number of <i>Villani</i>	% of vill's population	Total Acreage	% of tenanted acreage	Acres per head	Total Payments	d/acre
Hanslope	54	26.3	541	25.8	10.0	£36 13s 4d	17¾d
Haversham	32	71.1	288	56.7	9.0	£21 6s 8d	17¾d
Little Linford	22	78.6	110	74.8	5.0	£4 19s 0d	10¾d
Ravenstone	38	76	390	80.4	10.3	£28 5s 0d	17¾d
Stoke Goldington	7	22.6	42	14.3	6.0	£3 10s 0d	20d
Eakley	11	68.8	68.5	78.3	6.2	£7 5s 0d	25½d
Tyringham	28	75.7	212.5	73.7	7.6	£8 10s 0d	9½d
Total	192	46.6	1,652	42.2	8.6	£110 9s 0d	16½d

Vill	Number of <i>Villani</i>	% of vill's population	Total virgates	% of tenanted virgates	Virgate per head	Total Payments	£/virgate
Filgrave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gayhurst	11	50	6	36.4	0.6	£6 0s 0d	£1 0s 0d
Lathbury	24	61.5	14	45.5	0.6	£11 4s 0d	£0 16s 0d
Weston Underwood	7	17.1	4	15.7	0.6	£2 1s 4d	£0 10s 4d
Total	42	36.8	24	29.2	0.6	£19 5s 4d	£0 16s 0¾d

Total (calc. acres)	234	44.5	2,036	38.9	-	£129 14s 4d	-
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As with holding size, the render per acre was generally uniform within each vill, even when the villeinage pertained to different manors. In Hanslope, each of the nine acre holdings owed 13s 4d (17.8d per acre), despite being held from four different lords: William de Beauchamp, John fitzJohn, Robert of Tathall and Roger of Birchmore. The latter three men held their manors from William de Beauchamp, potentially explaining why their villeins held by the same terms. However, parts of this manor had been subinfeudated since the mid-twelfth century at the latest. If changes in holding size or renders had occurred after subinfeudation, then it seems unlikely that they would have developed in exactly the same way in each manor, suggesting that these were ancient, well-established renders by the time the Hundred Rolls were compiled. In turn, this

would imply that custom had prevented the lords from increasing their villeins' rents, as Hatcher suggested.⁵⁴⁰

Eakley exhibited the most variety: the villein that owed the least ($5\frac{1}{2}d$) and the most ($32d$) per acre in the entire hundred both held in this hamlet from the same lord. Renders were generally high in this hamlet, and there was some variety in holding size, possibly because it developed as a settlement later than some of the surrounding manors. It was characteristic of this region of dispersed settlement for new hamlets to grow up alongside existing villas as population and settlement expanded, and Eakley emerged and grew in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a secondary settlement of Stoke Goldington.⁵⁴¹ This later development may have enabled the lords of Eakley to charge higher rents than those already fixed by custom in other villas. Hatcher observed that later assarts tended to be charged at a higher rent than long-settled lands, as the lords were not restricted by custom in their dealings with the peasantry.⁵⁴² A different type of settlement emerged in Filgrave, another settlement that developed after Domesday. In this villa, later development had the opposite effect, as it lacked clear manorial structures and all of the land was held in free tenures, suggesting the independent action of free men in the assarting process.

Since only money values are provided for the tenants holding in villeinage in Bunsty, it is possible that any labour services were commuted; alternatively, it may just have been more convenient to record values rather than works. The value of rents, services and other dues are not broken down, so the relative weighting of rents and labour services cannot be established unless other documents are used. Using *IPM* extents, Table 31

⁵⁴⁰ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 14-21.

⁵⁴¹ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 127-9.

⁵⁴² Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 20-1.

shows the relative importance of labour and money rents in Haversham, Hanslope and Little Linford.⁵⁴³

It is striking that in Hanslope and Little Linford works were a much more significant part of the villein renders than money rents. This is unsurprising in Hanslope, as the large 800 acre demesne was served by just 360 acres of villeinage. The Hanslope villeins owed approximately 136 days' work, 129 of these providing two men. This included the obligation to work every day with two men from 1 August until 29 September except for the Sabbath and feast days, meaning that their labour was diverted from their own holdings during the crucial harvest period. Unless they had adult sons these villeins would have needed to pay for additional labour in order to look after their own land and fulfil their obligations.⁵⁴⁴

By contrast, the Haversham villeins owed most of their renders in money rents rather than works. This initially seems surprising, as the Hundred Rolls show that 54 percent of the arable on this manor was kept in demesne, so one would have expected that the lord would have required regular labour services. However, in Hanslope the demesne was more than double the acreage of the villeinage, whilst in Haversham it was only one and a half times as large, suggesting that proportionately fewer works would be required from each villein in order to work the demesne. Moreover, lords of smaller manors tended to be more reliant on wage labour to work their demesne than the greater lords of large manors like William de Beauchamp in Hanslope.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Little Linford: TNA C132/34/10, C133/106/8; calendared at *CIPM*, i, 656, 685, iv 109. Hanslope: TNA C133/86/1; calendared in *CIPM*, iii, 477. Haversham: TNA C133/6/4; calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 74.

⁵⁴⁴ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 148-9.

⁵⁴⁵ Dyer, *Making*, 151; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 100-1; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 27-8.

Table 31 The Ratio of labour to money rents on three Bunsty manors

Vill	Hundred Rolls						IPM extents			
	Total Arable	Demesne acreage	Demesne % of arable	Villein acreage	Villein % of arable	demesne : unfree	Year	Villein money rents	Labour value	Money rents : services
Hanslope	2,274	800.5	35	360	16	2.2 : 1	1298	£5 8s 6d	£16 8s 1½d	1 : 3
Haversham	721	386.0	54	234	45	1.6 : 1	1274	£15 12s 0d	£5 17s 0d	2.7 : 1
Little Linford	247	100.0	40	110	45	1 : 1.1	1267	£1 8s 8d	£2 8s 10½d	1 : 1.7
							1302	£2 3s 1½d	£4 6s 3d	1 : 2
Total	3,242	1,286.5	40	704	22	1.8 : 1	-	£24 12s 3½d	£29 0s 3d	1 : 1.2

The villeins were not the only unfree peasants recorded in Hanslope in the Hundred Rolls. There were also eight *cottarii* with five acres each and one *cottarius* with half an acre. Each *cottarius* with five acres owed 16*d* per acre, slightly lower than the villeins in Hanslope, even though smallholders tended to owe relatively higher rents elsewhere.⁵⁴⁶ However, the one man with only half an acre owed 12*d*, a higher rate per acre than the villeins or the other *cottarii*.

No other cottars are recorded in the Bunsty Hundred Roll, but other evidence suggests that there were some in other villis. *IPMs* suggest that there were unfree smallholders in Haversham, Stoke Goldington and Tyringham, as well as seven *akermanni* in Hanslope that were not included in the Hundred Rolls.⁵⁴⁷ If cottars and other groups of peasants were generally overlooked in the Bunsty roll, this has huge implications. It means that population increase would be underestimated, and mean holding size would be distorted. There were probably not cottars in every vill, as neither of the Little Linford extents mention any, and nor are they mentioned in a 1287 Lathbury extent.⁵⁴⁸ Still, it must be borne in mind that in at least four villis the Hundred Rolls do not account for groups of peasants that appear in other extents of a similar date.

The freeholdings were generally larger and owed lower rents than the unfree holdings in Bunsty. In the villis described in acres the average freeholding owed just 6¾*d* per acre, whilst a villein holding owed 16½*d*. The difference may have been less extreme, as the villein renders represent all services and payments whilst it is often noted that the free tenants had to pay scutage or other services, or additional payments in kind. Still, it

⁵⁴⁶ Kanzaka, 'Villein Rents', 600.

⁵⁴⁷ TNA C133/6/4; C133/7/6; C133/118/14; Calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 74, 83; iv, 309.

⁵⁴⁸ TNA C133/46/7; Calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 616.

remains certain that rents on the average freeholding were less per acre than the average villein holding.

Table 32 Freeholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Bunsty Hundred

Vill	Free tenants	Free acreage	Acres per head	Rents	d/acre
Hanslope	132	1,491.0	11.3	£39 19s 2½d	6½d
Haversham	13	129.5	10	£5 4s 3d	9¾d
Little Linford	5	37.0	7.4	£0 13s 8d	4½d
Ravenstone	13	95.0	7.3	£4 17s 4d	12¼d
Stoke Goldington	25	251.3	10.1	£7 6s 5½d	7d
Eakley	5	19.0	3.8	£0 5s 3d	3¼d
Tyringham	9	65.5	7.3	£1 7s 7d	5d
Total	202	2,088.3	10.3	£59 13s 9d	6¾d

Vill	Free tenants	Free virgates	Virgate per head	Rents	s/virgate
Filgrave	12	9.5	0.8	£3 0s 10½d	6s 5d
Gayhurst	11	10.0	0.9	£2 11s 3½d	5s 1½d
Lathbury	15	15.8	1.1	£3 0s 5d	3s 10d
Weston Underwood	34	21.5	0.6	£4 17s 4d	4s 6¼d
Total	72	47.3	0.7	£13 9s 11d	4s 9d

Total (calc. acres)	274	2,844.3	10.4	£73 3s 8d	-
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Table 33 Freeholdings and Unfree holdings in Bunsty Hundred compared

Vill	Mean Acreage		Mean d/acre	
	Free	Unfree	Free	Unfree
Hanslope	11.3	10.0	6½d	17¾d
Haversham	10.0	9.0	9¾d	17¾d
Little Linford	7.4	5.0	4½d	10¾d
Ravenstone	7.3	10.3	12¾d	17½d
Stoke Goldington	10.1	6.0	7d	20d
Eakley	3.8	6.2	3¾d	25½d
Tyringham	7.3	7.6	5d	9½d
Total	10.3	8.6	6¾d	16½d

Vill	Mean virgates		Mean s/virgate	
	Free	Unfree	Free	Unfree
Filgrave	0.8	-	6s 5d	-
Gayhurst	0.9	0.6	5s 1½d	20s 0d
Lathbury	1.1	0.6	3s 10d	16s 0d
Weston Underwood	0.6	0.6	4s 6¼d	10s 4d
Total	0.8	0.6	4s 9d	16s 0¾d

In Ravenstone, most freeholdings were the same size as the standard villein holding in that vill, either six or twelve acres. Some free tenants owed low rents of 5d per acre, but

most owed much more, if slightly less than the villeins. Three owed the same rate as the villeins and one owed more. This suggests that the difference between free and unfree may not have been clear-cut in this vill. Most of the free tenants had holdings of the same size or smaller than the villeins; some owed low rents, but others were burdened to a similar degree, if not more. Those in the best position economically in this vill were free, but not all those who were free were better off than all those who were unfree.

A significant minority of the free tenants in Bunsty held by lifetime leases. At least one free tenant held by a life term in six Bunsty vills. In these vills, tenants holding by life leases made up 16 percent of all free tenants; this 16 percent held just 10 percent of the free acreage, but accounted for 20 percent of the free rents received by lords. Not all of those who held by temporary leases held by worse terms, but the general pattern is clear. Short term leases or terms of lives gave the lord regular opportunity to renegotiate rents so they were not kept artificially low,⁵⁴⁹ unlike ancient freeholdings and unfree holdings that were protected by custom.

There were differences between free and unfree tenancies in Bunsty, but they were not always clear-cut. The average freeholding was larger than the average unfree holding, but only a minority of free tenants held large holdings, and there were numerous free smallholders. Over two thirds of freeholdings were the same size or smaller than the standard villein holding in the same vill, potentially minimising the difference between free and unfree. Although most free tenants owed less per acre than their unfree neighbours, some of the most heavily burdened peasants in this hundred were free, particularly those with smallholdings or holding by short-term leases.

⁵⁴⁹ Dyer, *Making*, 143-4.

Blackbourn

The fragmented copies of the Blackbourn Hundred Rolls record very little about customary tenants. Four terms are used: *villani*, *cottarii*, *gersumarii* and *gersumarii sokemanni*. Unfortunately, the entries referring to these peasants generally only record total acreages and not the number of peasants holding or services owed, making it impossible to know how much land each peasant held. Some more indications are provided for the *cottarii*, and in these cases it seems that each cottar just held a messuage or cottage and no arable land. The large acreages of villein land in some villis, for example 430 acres in Coney Weston, mean that there could have been large, regular villein holdings.⁵⁵⁰ However, it is clear that in others any villein holdings were small: in Ingham there were just nine acres of villeinage, and William Park had just one villein in West Stow, who held one messuage and one acre.⁵⁵¹

It has been suggested that villeins in Suffolk did not face the same onerous burdens as their equivalents in other shires, and that many enjoyed personal and economic freedoms not reflected in their legal status. Though many of Suffolk's villeins owed week works and customary fines, other aspects were more lax, and the total burden upon these peasants was lighter than elsewhere.⁵⁵² Villein holdings were as likely to fragment as freeholdings in Suffolk, due to high population pressures and the active peasant land market, but villeins would have fared no worse than freeholders in this respect.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ *Suffolk Hundred*, 22-3.

⁵⁵¹ *Suffolk Hundred*, 13, 36, 64.

⁵⁵² Bailey, *Suffolk*, 73-4. See also: Postgate, 'Field Systems of East Anglian', 307.

⁵⁵³ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 54-5, 64; Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 6-7; B. Dodwell, 'Holdings and Inheritance in Medieval East Anglia', *EcHR*, 2nd Series, 20 (1967), 55-9.

As the Hundred Rolls provide such little information about the customary tenants, three manorial extents that provide more detail will be explored. Two of these were preserved as part of the *IPM* of William de Criketot who died in 1299: one for the large manor of Ashfield, and the other for half a manor in Ixworth. The third extent is for the manor of Wykes in Bardwell which was held by Richard son of Henry son of Nicholas of St Edmund in c.1300 when the extent was made. His father Henry appeared in the 1283 tax returns and would have been lord at the time of the Hundred Rolls.⁵⁵⁴ In 1901, William Hudson published an article about three manorial extents, including this Wykes extent.⁵⁵⁵ Hudson indicated that the document was in private hands, and unfortunately its current location is unknown, but much of the extent was printed as an appendix to the article so it can be used for comparison.

Table 34 Analysis of peasant holdings in Wykes, Ashfield and Ixworth, Blackbourn Hundred

Manor	Wykes	Ashfield	Ixworth	Total
Free tenants	71	68	21	160
Free acreage	270.0	538.8	120.3	929.0
Mean acreage	3.8	7.9	5.7	5.8
% of tenant acreage	51.1	49.5	42.3	48.9
Unfree tenants	48	114	16	178
Unfree acreage	258.0	549.0	164.0	971.0
Mean acreage	5.4	4.8	10.3	5.5
% of tenant acreage	48.9	50.5	57.7	51.1
Total tenants ⁵⁵⁶	112	171	37	320
Total acreage	528.0	1,087.8	284.3	1,900.0
Mean acreage	4.7	6.4	7.7	5.9

Though Suffolk has been characterised as a county of small manors, it was shown above that neither Ashfield nor Ixworth were small manors, and that William de Criketot was not a typical Suffolk lord. Richard of St Edmunds was a less significant man than William, but his manor was not small and the tenanted land alone accounted for more

⁵⁵⁴ *Suffolk Hundred*, Appendix 3.

⁵⁵⁵ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 1-56.

⁵⁵⁶ The total number of tenants is lower than the combined number of free and unfree, because some held by both types of tenure.

than 500 acres. Unlike in Ashfield and Ixworth there was more free than unfree tenant land in Wykes, but only by a small margin.

In Ashfield, the acreage per head was particularly small because there were numerous holdings in common. There is no evidence of a regular villein holding, but there was less range in the size of the unfree holdings than in the size of the freeholdings. An incredible 49 percent of the free tenants in Ashfield held one acre or less, so though the mean free tenement was larger than the mean unfree tenement, in fact the majority of the villeins would have held more land than the majority of the freeholders. In Wykes, the *custumarii* held on average one and a half more acres than their free neighbours. Both the free and unfree holdings were irregular in Wykes, and neither the free nor the customary holdings had withstood the pressures of a growing population, the burgeoning land market and partible inheritance.

In Ixworth, unlike Wykes and Ashfield, all except three of the villeins held regular holdings of five, ten or twenty acres. The holdings were not subject to regular financial exactions and the money rents ranged from 1.1*d* to 6.1*d* per acre. Most of the holdings owed thirty-five works between 29 September and Pentecost (which falls seven weeks after Easter), and seven works between Pentecost and 1 August, performing one work a week, and the rest either owed half this (one work every two weeks), or double it (two works a week).

Table 35 Villein holdings in Ixworth, Blackbourn hundred

Name	Acres	Money Rents	Money rents per acre (<i>d</i>)	Quart of oats	Hens	Eggs	value of rents in kind (<i>d</i>)	Winter Works	Summer Works	Autumn Works	Value of works (<i>d</i>)	Total value of renders (<i>d</i>)	Total render per acre (<i>d</i>)
Humphrey King	10.5	1 <i>s</i> 10 <i>d</i>	2.1	1	0	10	12.3	35	7	0	22.8	57.1	5.4
Nicholas Stot	17.5	2 <i>s</i> 10½ <i>d</i>	2.0	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	69.1	4.0
Peter Porte	20.0	4 <i>s</i> 2¾ <i>d</i>	2.5	2	2	20	26.6	70	14	0	45.5	119.4	6.1
Walter Pluket	10.0	0 <i>s</i> 11¼ <i>d</i>	1.1	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	45.6	4.7
____ le Prude	10.0	3 <i>s</i> 1 <i>d</i>	3.7	2	1	12	25.4	35	7	0	22.8	83.4	8.5
Simon Palmer	10.0	2 <i>s</i> 11 <i>d</i>	3.5	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	69.3	7.1
Heirs of Geoffrey Bodin	10.0	3 <i>s</i> 1¾ <i>d</i>	3.8	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	72.1	7.4
Robert Tanton	6.0	1 <i>s</i> 0 <i>d</i>	2.0	1	1	6	13.2	35	7	0	22.8	46.2	8.0
William Wastel	10.0	2 <i>s</i> 6½ <i>d</i>	3.1	2	1	5	25.2	17.5	3.5	0	11.4	66.2	6.7
Simon Sueti	10.0	1 <i>s</i> 9¾ <i>d</i>	2.2	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	56.1	5.8
William Sparsho	10.0	5 <i>s</i> 0¾ <i>d</i>	6.1	1	2	20	14.6	35	7	27	49.8	123.4	12.5
William son of Simon de Brakeberwe	10.0	3 <i>s</i> 3¾ <i>d</i>	4.0	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	74.1	7.6
Gilbert Domelyn	10.0	2 <i>s</i> 5¾ <i>d</i>	3.0	1	1	10	13.3	35	7	0	22.8	64.1	6.6
Thomas Ede	10.0	3 <i>s</i> 7½ <i>d</i>	4.4	0.9	2	20	13.4	70	14	33	78.5	131.9	13.5
Robert Buller	5.0	1 <i>s</i> 1 <i>d</i>	2.6	0	1	10	1.3	17.5	3.5	0	11.4	24.8	5.1
Simon Payn	5.0	0 <i>s</i> 11 <i>d</i>	2.2	0.5	1	20	7.6	35	7	0	22.8	39.6	8.3
Total	164.0	£2 0 <i>s</i> 10½ <i>d</i>	3.0	17.4	18	193	19 <i>s</i> 4½ <i>d</i>	595	119	60	£1 17 <i>s</i> 2¾ <i>d</i>	£4 17 <i>s</i> 5¾ <i>d</i>	7.1

The number of works owed in Ixworth were generally relative to holding size, but Thomas Ede owed two works a week for his ten acres, whilst the other villeins with ten acres owed one a week. Thomas also owed relatively high money rents for his land, and he was one of only two men who owed any works between 1 August and 29 September, so he was particularly heavily burdened. The other man who owed harvest works was William Sparsho, and he also owed the heaviest money rent for his ten acres. The regularity of most of the labour services suggests that they were dictated by custom, whilst the money rents were negotiated on a case by case basis. Thomas and William or their predecessors were clearly in a poor negotiating position with their lord, as they were charged high money rents but also burdened with extra labour services. Including money rents and the value of labour services, William and Thomas owed more than three times as much per acre as Nicholas Stot (Table 35). The average free acre rendered just $3\frac{1}{4}d$ on this manor, and all of these villeins owed more than that. However, as many of the freeholders held particularly small amounts, the benefits of holding more land may have outweighed the hardship of owing higher rates.

In Ashfield and Wykes there was little correlation between labour services and tenement size. Some peasants owed particularly light works, and in Ashfield twenty-one of the *villani* owed no labour services at all. Rather than the more burdensome week works, most of Ashfield's villeins only owed occasional works. On average, the ninety-two peasants who owed labour services only owed eleven works per year, and the average render per acre including rents, works and payments in kind was only $5d$, much higher than the average free rent of $2d$ per acre but not a particularly heavy burden.

Compared to Ixworth's villeins, there was a striking lack of regularity in the amount of services owed by Ashfield's villeins. Moreover, in Ashfield harvest works were predominant, whilst more of Ixworth's villeins owed winter works. Harvest works were given a higher value in the extents and they took the peasant away from their own lands during a crucial period. Nonetheless, most Ashfield villeins seem to have been less heavily burdened. These two manors were in the same hundred and had been held by the same lord since before the Conquest, yet the organisation of villein lands, the size and regularity of holdings, the rate of money rents and type and extent of works were drastically different. The remains of a castle at Ashfield, coupled with the manor's size and value, suggest that Criketot or his predecessors were resident there at least part of the time, so if anything one would expect the villein holdings to be more regular and more heavily exploited there than in Ixworth. Nonetheless, as shown above, though Ixworth's demesne was smaller (221.5 acres opposed to Ashfield's 360 acres), a much higher proportion of the total arable was kept in hand by Criketot, amounting to 43 percent of the arable in Ixworth and just 25 percent in Ashfield. Arguably, the high proportion of demesne relative to villein land provided incentive to maintain regular villein holdings owing regular works, rather than the more sporadic structures in Ashfield. This comparison warns against sweeping generalisations, even when lands fell within the same region and the same fee.⁵⁵⁷

Week works, like those owed by Ixworth's peasants, have been considered particularly burdensome, but Bailey argued that they were not so in Suffolk.⁵⁵⁸ They could be irksome as they took peasants away from their own lands on a regular basis but the extent of the burden depended upon the type and frequency of the work. The Wykes

⁵⁵⁷ Other studies have furnished the same warning: Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 281; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 133, 168, 327.

⁵⁵⁸ Bailey, 'Villeinage', 437.

extent records more details about the works owed. For example, John Larke held five acres and owed no money rents. In addition to a few boonworks, John had to perform one work each week from Michaelmas onwards, until he had performed a total of forty works. However, certain tasks counted as more than one work, so John would have spent far fewer than forty days a year working for the lord.⁵⁵⁹

Bailey's supposition that villeins in Suffolk were generally less burdened than their equivalents elsewhere, despite the fact that they often owed week works, is borne out by the example of John Larke, whose week works were not burdensome. If the villeins in Ixworth owed their works in the same way as John, they would not have been obliged to work for their lord as often as the extent implies. Still, the likes of Thomas Ede, who owed a total of 117 works throughout the year as well as high money rents, was a heavily burdened peasant, at least relative to those around him. Nonetheless, there were freeholders who owed more per acre than Thomas, even taking into account his services. Robert the smith, a free tenant, owed the highest rate in Ixworth of 39½d for his one acre tenement, more than three times as much per acre as Thomas Ede. The variety in unfree terms in these Blackbourn vills was greater than in the Bunsty evidence considered above, suggesting that the line between freedom and unfreedom would have been more blurred in this Suffolk double-hundred.

⁵⁵⁹ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 53-4.

Table 36 Categories of peasants in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree hundred

Vill	<i>Liberi tenentes</i>	<i>Servi Socmanni</i>	<i>Socmanni</i>	<i>Servi Customarii</i>	<i>Servi</i>	<i>Tenentes in villengio</i>	<i>Operarii</i>	<i>Curucarii</i>	<i>Tenentes ad voluntatem Domini</i>	<i>Cottarii</i>	<i>Cotagiarii</i>	Multiple types of tenure	Total
Checkendon	4				14					6		1	25
Crowmarsh Gifford	4	7	2							9		5	27
Gatehampton	5			5									10
Goring	22			1						9			32
Ipsden	4				17					17			38
Little Stoke	2				8								10
Mapledurham Chaussy	6			3						6			15
Mongewell	5			16									21
Newnham Murren	20									2		1	23
North Stoke	8	2		29		5				6	5	2	57
Whitchurch	12					25	5	4	6			1	53
Total	92	9	2	54	39	30	5	4	6	55	5	10	311

Langtree

Unlike most other Oxfordshire hundreds, there was more free than unfree land in Langtree in 1279-80. However, there were more unfree men than free men, with stark consequences for the amount of land held by the unfree per head. But to divide Langtree landholders simply into 'free' and 'unfree' over simplifies the terms of status and tenure in this hundred. Table 36 shows the variety of ways in which the Langtree peasantry were described in the Hundred Rolls. This hundred exhibits more variety in terminology than either of the two already considered, and the different categorisations forcefully suggest that there were many degrees of status.⁵⁶⁰

The tenants *in villenagio* seem to have been broadly equivalent to other peasants described as *servi custumarii* and *servi* in this roll. Except for the *cottarii*, these three categories were the most common categories of unfree peasants in Langtree in 1279-80. The peasants in these three groups all held tenements that were measured in virgates or proportions of virgates, from one person who held a quarter virgate to another who held two virgates (Table 37).

Table 37 Holding size of the servi custumarii, servi and tenants in villenagio in Langtree

Village	0.25 v	0.5 v	0.75 v	1 v	1.5 v	2 v	Total
Checkendon	0	12	0	2	1	1	16
Gatehampton	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Goring	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ipsden	0	15	0	2	0	0	17
Little Stoke	0	7	0	1	0	0	8
Mapledurham Chausy	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Mongewell	0	14	0	2	0	0	16
North Stoke	1	27	4	2	0	0	34
Whitchurch	0	25	0	1	0	0	26
Total	1	108	4	11	1	1	126

⁵⁶⁰ Bailey, *Serfdom*, 18-9.

The mean money rent for the 108 half-virgate holdings was 5s 8½d, but only six of the 108 paid within a shilling of this mean figure. Eighty-six of them owed less, so it is more helpful to show the range of actual rents paid by these peasants (Table 38).

Table 38 Rents of the servi custumarii, servi, and tenants in villenagio in Langtree

Vill	1s 6d	2s 6d	2s 8d	3s 0d	3s 8d	4s 6d	5s 0d	12s 0d	13s 4d	Total
Checkendon								1	11	12
Gatehampton		5								5
Goring										0
Ipsden				1	9		5			15
Little Stoke									7	7
Mapledurham Chaussy								3		3
Mongewell	13					1				14
North Stoke		26					1			27
Whitchurch		7	1	17						25
Total	13	38	1	18	9	1	6	4	18	108

Within each vill there was general uniformity; there was some variety in Ipsden, but this vill was split between two manors. The modal rent, owed by thirty-eight of the half-virgaters and two of the virgaters, was 2s 6d per half-virgate. This rent recurs through this region, and seems to have represented the ‘standard’ rent for customary tenants with a half-virgate.⁵⁶¹ The villeins of Rycote, Oxfordshire, owed 16s per virgate, but they complained that they had been accustomed to render 5s plus works.⁵⁶² Though Dyer has argued that tenants preferred to pay in cash rather than labour,⁵⁶³ this shows that they were not always in favour of commutation, and also implies that 5s plus some services was deemed a reasonable rent for a virgate. Overall, 65 percent of the *servi custumarii*, *servi* and tenants in villenagio in Langtree owed within 1s either side of this value.

⁵⁶¹ For example, several sokemen and *consuetudinarii* in Benson owed this rate. *RH*, ii, 752a-754b.

⁵⁶² *RH*, ii, 757a.

⁵⁶³ Dyer, *Making*, 143. Kosminsky argued that a move from labour to money rents generally increased the peasants’ burden: Kosminsky, ‘Feudal Rents’, 17. See also: Schofield, *Peasant*, 30-1.

Table 39 Freeholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree Hundred

Vill	Number of freeholders	Hides/ carucates	Virgates	Acres	Cotlonds	Virgates per head	Total Rents	Rent per virgate
Checkendon	4	0	6.0	0	0	1.5	£3 0s 0d	10s 0d
Crowmarsh Gifford	8	0	7.5	0	0	0.9	£3 16s 5½d	10s 2d
Gatehampton	5	0	2.5	0	0	0.5	£1 9s 4d	11s 8d
Goring	22	2	10.5	22	0	0.9	£2 7s 3d	2s 7d
Ipsden	4	0	2.0	12	0	0.6	£1 7s 0d	10s 11d
Little Stoke	2	0	0.0	2	1	0	£0 11s 8d	-
Mapledurham	6	0	6.0	0	0	1	£1 1s 6d	3s 7d
Mongewell	5	1	5.5	0	0	1.9	£1 12s 3d	3s 5d
Newnham Murren	21	0	26.3	8	0	1.3	£7 3s 8d	5s 5d
North Stoke	10	1	6.0	0	1	1	£4 1s 0d	8s 1d
Whitchurch	12	0	9.5	8	0	0.8	£2 7s 7d	4s 10d
Total	99	4	81.8	52	2	1	£28 17s 8½d	5s 8d

The freeholdings were generally larger than the unfree holdings (Table 39): about one third of the freeholders held exactly a virgate; just under 60 percent of them held a virgate or more. This is striking when it is considered that less than a quarter of midland peasants analysed in a large sample taken from the Hundred Rolls held a virgate,⁵⁶⁴ and only 9 percent of the unfree population in this hundred held a virgate or more.

It seems likely that these large holdings were to some extent divided by leasing out parts to other tenants. In Checkendon, the rector of the church held one hide of land from John Marmion in free alms. However, a surviving account roll from 1274 records that the rector actually had five tenants, so this land was supporting more people than the Hundred Rolls would imply.⁵⁶⁵ All of these peasants were smallholders: one held one acre and a messuage, and the others just held a messuage each. Thus, the exclusion of these peasants from the Hundred Rolls is not necessarily misleading, because the rector's large holding was not actually divided. This does however have implications for population change in this hundred, and suggests that some of the large freeholdings may

⁵⁶⁴ Dyer, *Making*, 163; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 149-51.

⁵⁶⁵ TNA SC6/957/27.

in fact have been small manors, with tenants who were excluded from the Hundred Rolls. This was probably the case in each of the case study hundreds. In Bunsty and Blackbourn there are points where the Hundred Rolls explicitly acknowledge that some subtenants were not recorded.⁵⁶⁶

The mean free rent was 2s 10d per half-virgate, but there are numerous examples of higher status individuals or people with large holdings paying nominal rents. Discounting these, the average rent per free half-virgate rises to 6s 4d, slightly higher than the mean rent owed by the *servi custumarii*, *servi* and tenants *in villenagio*, and two-and-a-half times the modal rent of 2s 6d paid by this group.

This is not representative of actual burdens however, as all of the *servi custumarii*, *servi* and tenants *in villenagio* owed labour services in addition to their money rents. For example, twenty-six of the twenty-nine *servi custumarii* in North Stoke held a half-virgate for 2s 6d money rents. In addition, they provided three hens and one cock as churchscot and seven eggs at Easter. They had to plough and harrow one acre, and perform threshing services. During the harvest each *servus* had to reap five acres, carry the corn for one day and provide two men for two boonworks. Other services throughout the year included carrying the lord's corn to market, transporting one cart of wood and transporting manure, and providing five days of weeding. Unlike many of the other *servi*, no meadow services, such as mowing and hay-making were mentioned for the Stoke peasants in the Hundred Rolls, but two later extents record that these services were owed, so this was probably an accidental omission.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ For example John son of Roger and his tenants in Bunsty, and entries in Little Livermere, Blackbourn: *RH*, ii, 345b; *Suffolk Hundred*, 41.

⁵⁶⁷ *RH*, ii, 780b. TNA C133/72/5; C134/15/7.

The *servi* in Checkendon and Little Stoke owed particularly light labour services: each half-virgater had to mow and carry half an acre of meadow and give the lord two chickens, whilst those with a virgate owed double. Four of the Checkendon men owed no labour services but they had to act as reeve for the vill. Considering how light the services were for the other *servi*, this would have been a much more time consuming role, but it may have brought with it some degree of status, and reeves often received a stipend for their work.⁵⁶⁸ Henry the reeve of Rickinghall, Blackbourn, was the wealthiest named individual in that vill in the returns to the 1283 lay subsidy with moveables worth £9 8s.⁵⁶⁹

Nonetheless, though the Checkendon *servi* owed nominal services, they owed high money rents of one mark per half-virgate, over five times as much as the modal rent of 2s 6d. Though their works were so light, the total burden on these *servi* was high: the value of works combined with rents for the *servi custumarii* elsewhere generally came nowhere near the high rents charged in this vill.⁵⁷⁰ However, relative to the other tenants in their own vill, the burden on these *servi* does not seem so great. The free tenants in Checkendon with Little Stoke held similar sized holdings by similar terms to the *servi*. They all owed high rents, some even higher than the *servi*, and some of the freeholders even owed the same light labour services.

⁵⁶⁸ In five surviving account rolls for Whitchurch, the reeve received between 3s 6d and 5s. In 1270 he received 5s: TNA SC6/1118/17, m4; 1275, 4s 6d: SC6/1118/19, m1; 1276, 4s 9d: SC6/1118/20, m5; 1279, 4s 8d: SC6/1118/21, m1; 1282, 3s 6d: SC6/1118/22, m5. See also Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, 94-7; Dyer, *Making*, 122-3; Bailey, *English Manor*, 99-100; Harvey, *Cuxham*, 69-72.

⁵⁶⁹ Henry was named as reeve in several years in the manorial court rolls in the 1270s and 1280s. See for example: BL Add Roll 63397, 63400-63402. *Suffolk Hundred*, Appendix 24.

⁵⁷⁰ Using values on a North Stoke extent, the works of the Stoke, Gatehampton and Whitchurch peasants would have been worth between 3s 1d and 5s 2d; added to low rents of between 2s 6d and 3s, even the upper estimates were lower than the rents paid by the *servi* of Checkendon and Stoke.

By contrast, the three *servi* in Mapledurham Chausy were heavily burdened relative to both the free tenants on their own manor, and the rest of the unfree peasants in Langtree. Unlike the *servi* in Checkendon, the high rents of 12s per half-virgate in Mapledurham were not mitigated by light services; these *servi* were expected to work for their lord every day between 24 June and 29 September. Their high rents and three months of labour make these terms heavier than those experienced by any of the other *servi custumarii*, *servi* or tenants *in villenagio* in Langtree. The *cottarii* in this vill also owed particularly heavy services. With nearly half a virgate each, they held considerably more than most *cottarii* in the hundred, but in addition to their rents they were expected to work for the lord at their own cost every other day or every other week, excluding feast days and the Sabbath, for the whole year. The lord of Mapledurham retained 44 percent of the arable in demesne, the largest proportion of any vill in Langtree, helping to explain why his unfree tenants were so heavily burdened. Nonetheless, the terms appear particularly harsh, since the free tenants in Mapledurham owed very light rents for their lands. In Checkendon, the difference between free and unfree is likely to have been minimal, whilst in Mapledurham the difference in legal status was reinforced by a vast difference in economic position.

There were no sokemen in Langtree in Domesday but there were thirteen peasants described as *socomanni* in the Langtree Hundred Roll, holding in Crowmarsh Giffard and North Stoke. These sokemen were described as *servi socomanni*, so they were unfree. Robert de Vere's nine *servi socomanni* in Crowmarsh Gifford each held either a virgate or a half-virgate. Each half-virgater owed 5s 6d rents and 11¼d commuted payment for labour services, and each virgater owed double. Ralph Pippard held one third of Crowmarsh Gifford from Robert de Vere, and his two sokemen each held a half-virgate by the same terms. The Pippards had held this manor from the de Veres

since the late twelfth century at the latest, suggesting that the rents and services owed by these men had been fixed for at least a century.⁵⁷¹

Two *servi socomanni* held in North Stoke. Matilda Burel held two and a half virgates (the largest unfree holding in any of these case studies). She owed 5s for the half-virgate and 10s plus works for the two virgates. John de Fontem owed 10s and the same works for his two virgates, unless he acted as reeve. The total value of their labour services was at least 55d.⁵⁷² It is striking that this estimated figure performed for two virgates is exactly double the commuted payment made by the Crowmarsh sokemen for their one virgate. As the Stoke sokemen only owed 5s rents per virgate and the Crowmarsh sokemen owed 11s, the Stoke sokemen, despite seeming more servile because of the long list of labour services, were less burdened than those in Crowmarsh. In both villis, the sokemen owed less than most of the *servi custumarii* in Langtree hundred, so holding as a *servi sokeman* appears to have been a privileged form of unfree tenure.

The Langtree Hundred Rolls record five other categories of peasants: *cottarii*, *cotagiarii*, *carucarii*, *operarii* and *tenentes ad voluntatem domini*. Only the first category appears frequently, describing sixty-one individuals across seven villis. The second appears only in North Stoke, and the other three only appear in Whitchurch. All of the people in these groups were smallholders, generally only holding a dwelling and/or a few acres (Table 40).

⁵⁷¹ The Pippards are mentioned in a late twelfth-century agreement regarding Crowmarsh: *FoF Oxfordshire*, 2.

⁵⁷² Calculated using the 1295 North Stoke *IPM*: TNA C133/72/5.

Table 40 Unfree smallholdings in the Hundred Rolls: Langtree Hundred

Village	<i>Cottarii</i>	<i>Cotagiarii</i>	<i>Carucarii</i>	<i>Operarii</i>	<i>Tenentes ad voluntatem</i>	Messuages	Cottages	Cotlonds	Virgates	Acres	Money Rents	Labour Services
Checkendon	7	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	£0 19s 3d	No
Crowmarsh Gifford	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	£1 14s 0d	No
Goring	9	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	£0 12s 8d	Yes
Ipsden	17	0	0	0	0	0	13	1	0	16	£1 19s 8d	Yes
Mapledurham	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	2.5	0	£0 18s 0d	Yes
Newnham Murren	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1.5	£0 5s 0d	Yes
North Stoke	6	5	0	0	0	0	5	6	0	25	£0 16s 6d	Yes
Whitchurch	0	0	4	6	6	0	4	0	0.5	54	£1 14s 11d	Yes
Total	61	5	4	6	6	3	44	9	3	96.5	£9 0s 0d	-

The six *operarii* in Whitchurch had to work two and a half days each week for the whole year, except for three weeks of religious festivals, and work a few extra days during the harvest. The *carucarii* in Whitchurch each held six acres and owed 2s 6d plus some boonworks. Alternatively, three of the tenants would hold one of the lord's ploughs for the year and provide ploughing services, and the fourth was a smith who worked on the iron ploughs. The *carucarii* and *operarii* held similar amounts of land to the cottars in Ipsden, and performed similar, though lighter, amounts of work to the Mapledurham cottars, so surely the two groups could have been amalgamated and just described as *cottarii*. In other records, these groups were categorised as *cottarii*. For example, in the 1275 manorial account roll for Isabella de Fortibus' Whitchurch manor, the four *carucarii* of the Hundred Rolls were described as one *faber* and three *carucarii* and later in the same roll as four *cottarii*. The six *operarii* appear as *custumarii operant'* as well as later being categorised as *cottarii*.⁵⁷³ It is certain that these different categorisations refer to the same groups because their rents and services match those described in the Hundred Rolls. It seems that *cottarii* was used as the general term for this group of tenants when one was required, but this could be further broken down and other more specific categories applied. It is unclear why the Hundred Rolls, a government survey, differentiates between these categories, when the manorial accounts switch between differentiation and generalisation. This must emphasise the importance of manorial records in contributing to the collection of data for the Hundred Rolls, as otherwise the more general term *cottarii*, deemed adequate in other Langtree vills, would surely have been preferred here too.

Though *cottarii* and their equivalents were relatively common in Langtree, there were few free smallholders. Those that did have small freeholdings tended to pay relatively

⁵⁷³ TNA SC6/1118/19.

more for their holdings than those with larger tenements. Tenants with three, four and five acres respectively in Goring owed the same or more than most other free tenants in that vill owed for their half-virgates, showing that the fragmentation of holdings could raise rents and lead to less favourable terms of tenure. It is these free tenants who can often be seen as being in a worse position than their unfree neighbours. The difference in Langtree is that the vast majority of the freeholders had larger holdings so they were not as vulnerable as free tenants elsewhere. As there were so few free smallholders, it can be said that with few exceptions, the free tenants were better off as a group than the unfree tenants in this hundred.

Freedom and Unfreedom

Bunsty and Langtree certainly, and Blackbourn probably, contained more free than unfree land in 1279-80, but there was variety in how this land was held and populated both within and across these hundreds. Despite the fact that there was more free land in Bunsty and Langtree, there were in fact a greater number of unfree peasants, so there was less land per head shared by the unfree. This was not the universal experience however, as in Staine hundred in Cambridgeshire the unfree made up just over 30 percent of the peasantry and they held just over 30 percent of the tenanted land, so both the free and unfree shared a similar amount per head.

In Langtree and Bunsty, most of the unfree peasants held regular holdings, and there was broad uniformity within each manor or vill in terms of holding size and renders. In Blackbourn, where the evidence is available, most unfree holdings seem to have been irregular and rents and services were not uniform. Even in Ixworth, where most of the villeins held ten acres and owed the same amount of works, there were some irregular holdings, they all owed irregular money rents and there was also some variety in the

number of labour services owed. In many ways, these three hundreds were not typical of their regions and yet in this respect they do exhibit some expected features: moving east from Langtree to Blackbourn villein holdings became smaller, less regular and less likely to owe uniform rents and services, just as manorial structures were also likely to be more fragmented and weaker.⁵⁷⁴ In Bunsty and Langtree, unfree tenants on different manors within the same vill often owed the same types of services, indicating that the dues and renders owed were of some antiquity. This would suggest that custom had prevented the lord from exacting increased rents. Arguably, the dividing line between free and unfree tenants would have been less clear in parts of Blackbourn, because the variety in holding size, rents and renders amongst the unfree would have meant they were not immediately identifiable as a group. Moreover, this suggests that custom did not act as a restraint in this region, hence the variety in tenurial terms.

It is difficult to compare terms of tenure across the three hundreds, because of variables such as acre size and quality of land.⁵⁷⁵ In Bunsty, the mean rate per unfree acre seems high (16½d) but this included all payments and services. The mean free rent in Bunsty of 6¾d per acre was higher than in the Blackbourn manors that have been analysed (3½d in Wykes, 2d in Ashfield and 3¼d in Ixworth). The rates in Langtree were low: on average, each free half-virgate rendered 2s 10d and each unfree half-virgate rendered 5s 8½d and based on a twenty-five acre virgate this would work out to approximately 2¾d per free acre and 5½d per unfree acre. This could be a reflection both of the difficulties in farming parts of Langtree, and the lack of population increase putting pressure on land and rents. However, the unfree average does not include labour services which are difficult to calculate in this hundred, so the difference between free and unfree was in fact greater. Overall, rents in Bunsty seem to have been highest, reflecting the pressure

⁵⁷⁴ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 21, 144-5.

⁵⁷⁵ Dyer, *Standards*, 118-40.

on landholding caused by increased population, but also the fact that the hundred was situated in the fertile valleys of the Great Ouse.

Nonetheless, the above discussion emphasised the problems with using mean figures, and illustrated the variety in rents owed, so no absolute conclusions should be drawn. What was more important was the extent of the burden relative to one's close neighbours, who shared the same benefits and challenges in terms of environment and locality.⁵⁷⁶ Across the three hundreds, free tenants generally held more land and rendered less for it, but there were often also free tenants owing high rents, particularly amongst the smallholders.⁵⁷⁷ This was less of a problem for free tenants in Langtree, as most of them held more than their unfree neighbours, as well as paying relatively less for their holdings. In Bunsty hundred, many of the free peasants had holdings that were the same size as the 'standard' villein holding in their villis. Though they paid their rents in different ways, holding the same amount of land must have minimised the difference between free and unfree.

Nevertheless, though there may not have been a huge difference between free and unfree in some respects, it cannot be denied that there was a social stigma attached to unfreedom. Bailey has shown that villeinage and servile incidents declined far more rapidly after the Black Death than has previously been supposed. He has argued that this rapid decline in the 1350s and 1360s shows the unpopularity of villeinage: status mattered, and unfreedom was viewed as restrictive and degrading.⁵⁷⁸ Moreover, a comparison of tenurial terms does not provide the full picture, as there were other

⁵⁷⁶ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 140.

⁵⁷⁷ For the tendency towards polarisation of wealth amongst free tenants see: Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 128-9.

⁵⁷⁸ Bailey, *Serfdom*, 93-5, 331.

servile incidents which were not always recorded in full in tenorial surveys. Unfree peasants owed merchet, leyrwite and heriot and had to seek permission or pay chevage to live off the manor, and theoretically the lord could tallage his villeins at will.⁵⁷⁹ These incidents were not enforced on every manor, but for some villeins they represented a huge burden. Even though these payments were generally fixed by custom in the thirteenth century, the possibility that the lord could breach custom and charge them arbitrarily remained, and their existence was a reminder of the villeins' servility.⁵⁸⁰

Some tenants may have preferred labour services rather than having to accumulate enough to pay their lord in coin,⁵⁸¹ but they did mark the unfree as different to their free neighbours. Whether light or heavy, labour services may have had a certain stigma.⁵⁸² Moreover, even if the given value of a work equalled the rents paid by free tenants, the cost of performing that work rather than tending to one's own land cannot really be calculated. This would have been particularly true during the harvest period, when most of the unfree peasants in these hundreds owed their works. In Mapledurham, Langtree, the *servi custumarii* owed no services for nine months of the year but regular services for the three months over the harvest period; in Ashfield, Blackburn, most of the *villani* owed few works, but most of them were during the harvest. However, in order to pay their rents and feed their families, many free tenants and unfree tenants who did not owe labour services would have needed to seek wage labour anyway, so would not have been able to focus all of their energy on their own land. In this context, both free and unfree could have ended up labouring alongside each other without distinction. Where unfree tenants held large holdings and many free tenants were smallholders, such as

⁵⁷⁹ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-7.

⁵⁸⁰ Bailey, *Serfdom*, 37.

⁵⁸¹ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 12.

⁵⁸² Hilton, 'Freedom', 12-3; Dyer, *Making*, 143; Dyer, 'Ineffectiveness of Lordship', 85; Britnell, *Commercialisation*, 65-7.

Hanslope, Bunsty, the free smallholders may have even ended up working for their unfree neighbours, helping them farm their lands and fulfil their labour services in return for payment. There is a difference between working for a wage and being an unfree labourer, but if the unfree peasants received food from their lords and paid low rents in compensation, the line may have become blurred.

Not all labour services were performed by unfree peasants, however.⁵⁸³ Certain free tenants in Checkendon with Little Stoke, Langtree, performed the same light services as the *servi* on the same manor. At the 1240 Suffolk eyre, William of Tuddenham was judged to be free because he had never paid merchet for his daughters to marry, despite the fact that he owed numerous labour services.⁵⁸⁴ Moreover, it was possible for free tenants to hold unfree lands, without the servile services affecting their personal status.⁵⁸⁵ In all three hundreds, some peasants held both free and unfree land, but it is rarely possible to tell from the surveys whether they were free men holding unfree land or vice versa. Technically, it should have been impossible for an unfree tenant to accumulate more land, as a villein was his lord's chattel, and could own no property of his own.⁵⁸⁶ In reality, there is evidence that unfree peasants did manage to purchase more land and owned chattels.⁵⁸⁷ If the peasant was free but held unfree land, it suggests that there was little stigma attached to unfree tenures, or at least that the benefits of holding more land outweighed any negatives.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸³ See for example: Bailey, *Suffolk*, 48-9. The most onerous week works were, however, exclusively performed by unfree peasants: Bailey, *Serfdom*, 92-3.

⁵⁸⁴ *Suffolk Civil Pleas*, 861.

⁵⁸⁵ Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 77.

⁵⁸⁶ Hyams, *Kings*, 21-4, 125; Hilton, *Bond Men*, 55; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 112-7.

⁵⁸⁷ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, 81-2.

⁵⁸⁸ Bailey, 'Villeinage', 450-1. This changed after the Black Death, when fewer few peasants were prepared to take on servile tenures because there was less pressure on landholding: Bailey, *Serfdom*, 56-8, 291-3.

As the customary tenants are not named in the surviving copies of the Blackbourn Hundred Rolls, it is impossible to tell if they were also holding as free tenants elsewhere. None of the villeins listed on the Ixworth *IPM* also held free land in the vill, but in Ashfield there were ten peasants, and in Wykes there were seven, who held both free and unfree land in their manors. More significantly, the Wykes extent records that no fewer than twenty-eight of the *custumarii* in that manor had also acquired free lands from other lords.

For example, Adam and Hugh de Depmer each held a messuage and two acres as *custumarii* in Wykes. They also held freely, each holding: one rood from Albric Unfrey, rendering $0\frac{1}{4}d$; half an acre from Ralph Skinner rendering $0\frac{1}{2}d$; and one and a half roods from Alice Marger, rendering $1\frac{1}{4}d$.⁵⁸⁹ These were small fragments of land held from local landlords, but it is significant that they had accumulated these lands, despite their unfree status. (Or rather, as this was a region of partible inheritance and their holdings were identical, that their shared ancestor had accumulated these holdings and they had inherited equal portions.)

The fact that these details are included in an extent that only related to the manor of Wykes, shows that these *custumarii* had not managed to bypass their lord Richard entirely when they created tenurial links with other people. The extent states that all of the rents owed for these free tenements were collected by the lord, who then passed it on to the other lords. Considering the numerous small fractions of land and rents, this would have created a lot of work and required sophisticated accounting methods to ensure that every farthing was allocated correctly.⁵⁹⁰ The lord of Wykes received no

⁵⁸⁹ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 17-8.

⁵⁹⁰ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 19.

financial gains through this system; it is specified that he collected the money and paid it to other lords, not that he took a cut himself. This directly contradicts Hatcher's assertion that 'lords were concerned far less with controlling the lives of their villeins than with profiting from their right to do so.'⁵⁹¹ It shows that some lords did seek to control their unfree peasants. In doing so, Richard was attempting to ensure that his *custumarii* remained bound to him. He was controlling any ties that could have formed between his unfree tenants and other lords.

The Wykes extent does not record whether any of the free tenants held elsewhere, though many of them must have done. This is simply because the lord did not have the same control over his free tenants.⁵⁹² Richard did not (or could not) prevent his unfree tenants from accumulating more land, but he ensured that they did not bypass his control to do so.

Though some peasants may have appeared 'laughably servile',⁵⁹³ the status of others would have been less apparent, illustrated by numerous court cases regarding disputed status across the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At the 1261 Oxfordshire eyre, Richard the smith claimed nine acres from the abbot of Eynsham that had been held by his grandfather Walter, but he lost the case because it was shown that Walter had held in villeinage.⁵⁹⁴ Also in 1261, Alice failed in her attempt to claim one third of her late husband William Wodard's lands as dower, because the jurors stated that William had held in villeinage.⁵⁹⁵ Whilst this does not prove that Richard was unaware of his

⁵⁹¹ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 10; Dyer agreed that many restrictions on villeins were seen as opportunities to make money: Dyer, *Making*, 141, 179.

⁵⁹² Bailey, *Suffolk*, 47.

⁵⁹³ Hyams, *Kings*, 249.

⁵⁹⁴ A. Jobson, 'The Oxfordshire Eyre Roll of 1261', PhD Thesis, King's College London (2006), 163.

⁵⁹⁵ Jobson, 'Oxfordshire Eyre of 1261', 182.

grandfather's status or that Alice did not know that her husband had held in villeinage, it does show that these peasants felt they had a chance of winning: these tenements were not so obviously servile that it was a waste of time trying. There were numerous similar cases elsewhere,⁵⁹⁶ but it is even more significant that these cases occurred in Oxfordshire, where it has been shown that the difference between free and unfree tenures was greater than in eastern England.

At the 1241 Oxfordshire eyre, John the Glover claimed that his father Philip had held a messuage in Crowmarsh Gifford and Roger Waleman had disseised him of it. Roger identified himself as a villein holding from the countess of Oxford, so argued that the case should not be heard.⁵⁹⁷ If the difference between free and unfree was obvious, it is difficult to explain how John could have been unaware of Roger's status, or why he would have wasted time and money pursuing the claim in the courts. Some peasants seem to have been eager to admit their villein status when appearing as defendants in a legal case, as it was a sure defence against any claim made of them: sometimes unfree status could be beneficial.⁵⁹⁸

Unfree peasants could not act as hundred jurors or take on certain roles in the administration, but they did have important roles in manorial administration that could give them status and influence in an area.⁵⁹⁹ Certain communal obligations were shared by all regardless of status, such as the reporting of crimes and raising of the hue and cry and pursuit of criminals.⁶⁰⁰ The community would have been brought together by meetings of courts, by payment of amercements on the vill, and by attendance at local

⁵⁹⁶ See for example: *Suffolk Civil Pleas*, 276, 344, 450, 479, 548, 579, 738, 879, 998, 1071, 1107, 1119.

⁵⁹⁷ *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, ed. J. Cooper (Oxford, 1989), 455.

⁵⁹⁸ It could act as an impediment if he later hoped to prove his freedom, however: Hyams, *Kings*, 171-2.

⁵⁹⁹ Bailey, *English Manor*, 98-100.

⁶⁰⁰ Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 64-7.

markets, fairs and celebrations. All would have been expected to attend their local church, from the smallholders to the local lords. A social stigma may have been attached to unfreedom, but it seems unlikely that such an attitude would have been all pervasive in small communities where interaction was encouraged through work patterns, religious life and administration.⁶⁰¹

Freedom would only have been beneficial if a peasant had the means and inclination to make use of his freedom. For smallholders and the landless, freedom must have often meant little more than freedom to starve. That is not to say that unfreedom was not resented, particularly when it was accompanied by economic disabilities. But often freedom from certain obligations rather than freedom in any absolute sense would have been desirable.⁶⁰²

The main theme to emerge from this discussion is variety, and difficulty in characterising a typical peasant within or across these hundreds. In the context of such variety, an attempt to draw a single dividing line between free and unfree is unrealistic and artificial.⁶⁰³ In Haversham, Bunsty, where nearly half the freeholders held the same amount as the villeins, they owed similar levels of rent and the villeins paid the vast majority of their rents in cash, it seems unlikely that a distinct line would have existed between the two groups. In Mapledurham, Langtree, where the unfree peasants were heavily burdened by services and the free owed light rents for their large holdings, the difference would have been more obvious, because it was reinforced by difference in economic and social status. Generalisation and broad narratives about peasant

⁶⁰¹ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 132-3; E. Britton, *The Community of the Vill: A Study in the History of the Family and Village Life in Fourteenth-Century England* (Toronto, 1977) 167.

⁶⁰² Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 161-2.

⁶⁰³ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 118.

experience are valuable, but they tend to minimise difference. This study has provided the opportunity to focus in detail on three small areas and bring variety to the forefront in an attempt to recognise the multiplicity of possible peasant experiences and how they were influenced by local environment and lordship.

2.3 The Peasantry: from Domesday to the Hundred Rolls

The society revealed in the Hundred Rolls of 1279-80 appears more complex than that described in Domesday: tenurial structures overlapped, the peasantry held by diverse terms, and were categorised in a greater variety of ways than they had been in the eleventh-century survey. But are these differences real or just apparent? Domesday and the Hundred Rolls were compiled at different times for different reasons and the commissioners had different terms of reference.⁶⁰⁴ Nonetheless, valuable conclusions can be drawn from a comparison, particularly for the localities where other evidence survives to bridge the gap between the two surveys.

It was shown above that in every hundred except Langtree a comparison of Domesday and the Hundred Rolls conformed to the expected population trends and showed a substantial increase. Moreover, the tendency for manors to fragment can be illustrated by a comparison of the two surveys. The fourteen manors in Staine, Cambridgeshire, in 1086 had increased to twenty-three manors by 1279-80; the fifteen manors in Bunsty had increased to twenty-four. By contrast, only two manors in Langtree had been divided during these two centuries, whilst another two had merged into one.

⁶⁰⁴ Raban, *Second Domesday*, 37-58.

It is easy to compare the recorded population and the number of recorded manors between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, but it is harder to establish their effects on the resident peasantry. The fragmentation of manors combined with high population increase in Staine and Bunsty could have weakened seigneurial control, made landholding structures more fluid and increased freedom of action for the inhabitants of these hundreds. Conversely, it could have increased the pressure on the peasantry, as there were a greater number of people competing for land, and a greater number of manorial lords appropriating land and resources to their own use.

Differences in personal status and tenurial terms are difficult to compare between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, because Domesday records so much less information than the Hundred Rolls. Moreover, although the two surveys shared some terminology for categorising the peasantry, the meanings of these terms shifted during these two centuries. *Villani* and *servi* described two very different groups in Domesday, but the two terms seem practically equivalent whenever they appear in the thirteenth century.⁶⁰⁵ There were no sokemen in Langtree in Domesday, but they appear in two villis in the Hundred Rolls. There were no *cottarii* in any of these hundreds in Domesday, but they appear in all of them in the Hundred Rolls and the term *bordarii* had fallen out of use. The simplicity of the categorisations in Domesday is sure to be misleading; it cannot be anything but suspicious that Domesday records so few categories of peasant at the very time when a multiplicity of terms would most be expected as Norman and Anglo-Saxon customs and languages collided.⁶⁰⁶ By the late thirteenth century, it was even less possible to reduce the various terms of tenure to a few standard categories, reflected in

⁶⁰⁵ Davies, 'On servile status', 225; Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 77; Hilton, *Bond Men*, 56. See, for example, the *servi custumarii* of North Stoke, described as *custumarii* in a 1295 extent, and as *villani* in a 1310 extent: *RH*, ii, 778b-180a.; TNA, C133/72/5; C134/15/7.

⁶⁰⁶ Bloch, *Slavery*, 89-90; Stenton, *ASE*, 476-7.

the variety of ways in which peasants were described in the Hundred Rolls and other surviving evidence.

The potential for tracing the evolution of tenures is greatest in Blackbourn double-hundred, because of additional records that were compiled and preserved by Bury St Edmunds, most notably Bury C (probably early twelfth century) and the late twelfth-century *Kalendar*. In Honington, both Bury C and the *Kalendar* record twelve tenants; at the former date they shared twenty-nine acres and rendered 37*d*, and at the latter date they shared thirty acres and rendered 36*d* hidage.⁶⁰⁷ At Wattisfield, the socage tenants shared half a carucate (sixty acres) in Domesday, fifty-nine acres in Bury C and sixty acres in the *Kalendar*; they were recorded as owing 80*d* in the latter two surveys.⁶⁰⁸ In Domesday, five sokemen held forty acres at Elmswell; in Bury C, twelve peasants were recorded as holding forty-one and a half acres and rendering 41½*d*; in the *Kalendar*, five peasants, plus their parceners, shared forty acres and owed 40*d* hidage.⁶⁰⁹ Though there were more people listed in Elmswell in Bury C, it is possible that they represented the parceners that were otherwise grouped together in both Domesday and the *Kalendar*. The payments recorded in the *Kalendar* were described as hidage but this description was not applied in Bury C; nonetheless, the fact that they were generally rendered at the same rate, suggests that this payment was of some antiquity by the late twelfth century.

That is not to say that society was static and both Bury C and the *Kalendar* probably minimise the complexity of tenurial structures in Blackbourn. Many of the tenements were divided between parceners, so the apparent continuity recorded in seignorial

⁶⁰⁷ *FD*, 38; *Kalendar*, 45-6.

⁶⁰⁸ LDB 365v (Suffolk, 14,79); *FD*, 39-40; *Kalendar*, 47-8.

⁶⁰⁹ LDB 364v (Suffolk, 14,73); *FD*, 38-9; *Kalendar*, 46.

documents would have been less evident on the ground. Little continuity can be found between the *Kalendar* and the Hundred Rolls, and this can only partially be explained by the fragmentary survival of the later returns. The *Kalendar* recorded systems and customs that were already substantially undermined by fragmentation, facilitated in this area by partible inheritance and an active land market as well as population change. A few of the dues owed in the *Kalendar* are also recorded in the Hundred Rolls, but much less frequently and systematically, suggesting that tenurial fragmentation and the process of time had further undermined these structures. Nonetheless, that some evidence of similar dues and services can still be observed in the Hundred Rolls emphasises the strength of custom and persistence of certain obligations.

This is most evident in the vill of Stanton. The forty-five *sokemanni gersumarii* who held in this vill in 1279-80 shared 206 arable acres, six acres of meadow and woodland and one acre of herbage with messuages. Between them they owed 12s hidage and fifteen quarts of oats as foddercorn. They also had to perform ploughing services during the harvest with a fixed amount of food from the lord provided. In money rents they owed 34s 3½d.⁶¹⁰ In total, rents to the manor and hidage were equivalent to approximately 2.7d per acre, slightly lower than the average freehold acre which owed about 3d, but this does not include their labour services or foddercorn.

In the twelfth-century *Kalendar*, *gersuma* was specifically used to describe merchet payments, so it is possible that these *gersumarii* sokemen were sokemen who owed merchet, but it does not clarify their legal status. Though merchet did come to be seen as a mark of unfreedom throughout the thirteenth century, and at times it was used as

⁶¹⁰ *Suffolk Hundred*, 46.

conclusive proof,⁶¹¹ it was common for free sokemen to render it. The rate of 32*d* for merchet was described as fixed or certain (*de certo*), suggesting a degree of freedom, as theoretically lords could charge unfree tenants at will. For example, manorial court rolls for Rickinghall in Blackbourn record that in 1279 two merchets of 2*s* were paid, but another two people were charged at double this rate.⁶¹²

Though they paid merchet, it seems certain that these sokemen were free, as it is specifically recorded that they were able to sell their land without the abbot's permission. Being bound to one's land was described by Hatcher as the 'most fundamental' limitation of unfreedom, so this specification is particularly significant.⁶¹³ Free men were not the only people buying and selling land, particularly in East Anglia,⁶¹⁴ but the unfree theoretically needed their lord's permission to do so, and it seems likely that any tenants specifically described as having the right to sell freely were personally free.

The services owed by these sokemen – hidage, foddercorn, suit of court, labour services – were all also owed by the socage tenants recorded in the late twelfth-century *Kalendar*. However, it was not only the sokemen in Stanton who owed these types of dues in the Hundred Rolls. Stanton is unique in Blackbourn as these dues appear relatively regularly, being paid by free tenants holding *de hundredo*. Though the abbot held the hundred from the king, this is not equivalent to stating that they held from the abbot directly, and this formula did not replace *tenet abbate*. Instead, this formula suggests that these tenants were holding allodial lands independent of manorial

⁶¹¹ For example, William of Tuddenham was judged free because he had never paid merchet: *Suffolk Civil Pleas*, 861. See also: Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 153-6; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 37-40.

⁶¹² BL Add Roll 63397, m1-2.

⁶¹³ Hatcher, 'Serfdom', 30; Hyams, *Kings*, 234-5.

⁶¹⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 54-5; Bailey, *English Manor*, 29-30.

structures. They held from the hundred, and owed the type of dues and services that had originally been paid to the hundred. These lands and these tenants pertained to the abbot as lord of the liberty, not because of a tenurial right.

Thirty-two tenements were held *de hundredo* in Stanton, and most owed hidage, suit to the hundred court, foddercorn, sheriff's aid or some combination of all four.⁶¹⁵ These tenements were distinguished from those held directly from the abbot because the money render was described as hidage and suit was owed to the hundred rather than the manor court. It is arguable that payments *de hidagio* were equivalent to other money rents at this date. The payments may have originated as customary or public dues owed by the socage, or even be remnants of older geld payments, but by the thirteenth century they served the same function as other money rents.⁶¹⁶ However, it is particularly unfathomable that this term would still be in use in Stanton if the payments were equivalent to manorial rents because the manorial lord and the hundredal lord was the same individual.⁶¹⁷ The average rent paid to the manor per free acre was 3*d*, but the average hidage payment was only 0.91*d*, indicating that the hidage payments pertained to a privileged type of free tenure.

However, a direct line cannot be drawn between hidage in the *Kalendar* and in the Hundred Rolls. In the *Kalendar*, hidage was paid at exactly 1*d* per acre in Stanton, without exception. The mean of 0.91*d* a century later is close, but it masks a great deal of variety. Moreover, those holding in the *Kalendar* also owed various other payments and dues, so in reality they would have been paying greatly in excess of 1*d* per acre.

⁶¹⁵ For example see Nicholas of Stanton and Geoffrey son of John of Stanton: *Suffolk Hundred*, 47-8.

⁶¹⁶ As Lennard suggests, *Rural England*, 374. See also: *Kalendar*, xxxiii-xxxiv; Roffe, *Domesday*, 42.

⁶¹⁷ Dyer, 'Ineffectiveness of Lordship', 79-80.

What appears to have been a relatively burdensome type of tenure in the late twelfth century, had developed into one of the freest in the vill by 1279-80.

In Domesday, St Edmunds had sixty sokemen with two carucates (approximately 240 acres) in Stanton.⁶¹⁸ It is tempting to associate these sokemen with the seventy people or more recorded in the *Kalendar* holding 234 acres of the socage in Stanton,⁶¹⁹ and also with the forty-five sokemen holding 206 acres in the Hundred Rolls. However, as illustrated, there were others holding in the Hundred Rolls whose terms of tenure seem similar to those recorded in the *Kalendar*. Moreover, in addition to the sokemen in Domesday, there were also seven free men with one carucate and thirty acres holding in Stanton. The abbot had the commendation and the soke of all the free men and sokemen, but only the sokemen held in dependent tenure and belonged to the fold. In the *Kalendar*, though the labels ‘free man’ and ‘sokeman’ were not used, a group of the socage tenants holding sixty acres were described as ‘freer’ (*liberiores*) than the other peasants.⁶²⁰ They paid hidage at the same rate as the others, but they did not owe *averpenny* or *wardpenny* or pay merchet for their daughters to marry, and most of them owed suit to the hundred rather than the manor. Those who were less free owed these payments and owed suit at the manor. They also had to perform customary works including ploughing and reaping for the lord.⁶²¹

It seems possible that this gulf had widened over the ensuing century, so the successors of those who were ‘freer’ in c.1186 were holding by the light terms that accompanied lands held *de hundredo* in the Hundred Rolls, whilst the successors of the rest of the

⁶¹⁸ LDB 364-364v (Suffolk, 14,72).

⁶¹⁹ *Kalendar*, 39.

⁶²⁰ *Kalendar*, 38.

⁶²¹ *Kalendar*, 39.

socage tenants were the more heavily burdened *sokemanni gersumarii*. In this latter group particular parallels are evident, such as the payment of merchet and labour services. It is even possible that the split in these two groups should be traced back further to Domesday, and the freer tenants of the late twelfth century and the tenants *de hundredo* in the Hundred Rolls were the successors of the free men of 1086, whilst the others were the successors of the sokemen.

Such a direct link cannot be traced but as a broad development it seems reasonable. However, the acreage held by the groups is not consistent: the Domesday free men held around 150 acres and the sokemen 240, 390 acres altogether; there were 234 socage acres in the *Kalendar*, and the 'freer' tenants held about sixty of this; the sokemen in the Hundred Rolls held 206 acres and the tenants *de hundredo* held 241.5 acres, a total of 447.5. This may not be as big a problem as it initially seems however, as acreages were not recorded consistently. The figures for Domesday are worked out on the basis of 120 acres to a carucate, so cannot be considered certain. Those in the *Kalendar* are described as *ware* acres which may not be the same measure used in the other surveys. Other measures were used in different villis within the *Kalendar* itself.⁶²² Though the total acreage of the sokemen and tenants *de hundredo* in the Hundred Rolls was 447.5 acres, considerably higher than the amount in the *Kalendar*, across the whole vill a total of 212*d* hidage was owed, relatively close to the 234*d* hidage owed in the *Kalendar*. Moreover, though the five suits of court attached to this land in the *Kalendar* had fragmented and were owed by twenty-nine different individuals by 1279-80, the fragments still totalled almost exactly five suits, implying that the same pieces of land were under consideration. Further to any possible differences caused by the nature of the surveys themselves, physical changes on the ground may have caused the acreage

⁶²² For example in Troston. *Kalendar*, 43-4.

held in these tenures to fluctuate over the two centuries, and pressures on the individuals could cause them to rise or fall in status.

Differences in lordship and environment would have meant that terms of tenure and status developed differently across the rest of this hundred. In the Blackburn Hundred Rolls, Stanton is the only vill where men and women held *de hundredo*, and socage dues like hidage and foddercorn appear only intermittently in other vills. It is possible that some of the free tenants in the Hundred Rolls were holding lands that had been held by tenants of the free socage in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but over time they had become indistinguishable from other free tenures. It is also possible, however, that others had fallen on the other side of the free/unfree divide and were included amongst the *villani* in the Hundred Rolls. The difference between sokemen and villeins could be difficult to establish. In Samson's *Kalendar* it is noted that Alexander son of Ralph of Weston claimed four men plus their parceners that were resident on the socage land in Hopton as his *lancetti* or villeins.⁶²³ The men owed identical dues and held in the same place as the other sokemen in Hopton, showing that the types of render and origins of a tenement did not automatically distinguish sokemen from unfree tenants.⁶²⁴

Unfortunately, there are no surviving twelfth-century surveys to aid comparison between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls in the other hundreds. It seems impossible to compare the *villani* and *bordarii* of Domesday with the plethora of peasant categories in Langtree in the Hundred Rolls, suggesting that there had been great shifts in status across these two centuries. If the terminology used in the Hundred Rolls is ignored,

⁶²³ *Kalendar*, 52.

⁶²⁴ Maitland pointed out a similar example in the c.1127 *Black Book of Peterborough*, where eight *bovarii* each held the same amount of land and performed the same tasks, but some were free and some unfree: *DBB*, 33.

however, some comparison in terms of holding size may be possible. The amount of land held by the Domesday *villani* is not specified, but Lennard showed that where information is supplied, they generally held a half-virgate or more.⁶²⁵ The *bordarii* tended to be smallholders with just a few acres.⁶²⁶ If this is presumed to have been the case in Langtree as well, then the proportions of *villani* and *bordarii* in Domesday can be compared with the proportions of peasants in the Hundred Rolls who held a half-virgate or more, and those who held less than a half-virgate. By ignoring the division between free and unfree and the variety of categorisations in the Hundred Rolls, it can be established whether the peasantry generally held more or less in 1279-80 than they had in 1086.

Table 41 A comparison of holding size between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Langtree

Vill	Domesday Book				Hundred Rolls			
	<i>Villani</i>	<i>Villani</i> (%)	<i>Bordarii</i>	<i>Bordarii</i> (%)	≥ half- virgate	≥ half- virgate (%)	< half- virgate	< half- virgate (%)
Checkendon	8	72.7	3	27.3	19	76.0	6	24.0
Crowmarsh Gifford	12	52.2	11	47.8	18	66.7	9	33.3
Gatehampton	8	66.7	4	33.3	10	100.0	0	0.0
Goring	21	91.3	2	8.7	14	43.8	18	56.3
Ipsden	6	54.5	5	45.5	20	52.6	18	47.4
Little Stoke	6	75.0	2	25.0	8	80.0	2	20.0
Mapledurham Chaussy	7	58.3	5	41.7	8	53.3	7	46.7
Mongewell	6	35.3	11	64.7	21	100.0	0	0.0
Newnham Murren	13	56.5	10	43.5	16	69.6	7	30.4
North Stoke	26	74.3	9	25.7	40	70.2	17	29.8
Whitchurch	20	74.1	7	25.9	35	66.0	18	34.0
Total	133	65.8	69	34.2	209	67.2	102	32.8

It is immediately striking that the relative proportion of *villani* in 1086 is very close to the proportion of tenants who held a half-virgate or more in 1279-80. *Villani* made up 66 percent of the dependent peasantry in 1086, and 67 percent of the peasantry in 1279-80 held a half-virgate or more. Smallholders in 1086 and 1279-80 made up 34 and 33

⁶²⁵ Lennard, 'Domesday *Villani*', 250-2.

⁶²⁶ Lennard, 'Bordars', 342-71.

percent respectively. This apparent continuity does hide some variety, and in certain villis there had been substantial changes across these two centuries. Still, the overall continuity in terms of relative holding size is impressive.⁶²⁷ The similar proportions at both points in time suggest that the pressures on the peasantry in the two centuries after Domesday, in particular regarding the proliferation of smallholdings, have been overstated.

However, Langtree is the only one of the case study hundreds where the increase in recorded population was negligible, and peasants in Oxfordshire tended to have larger holdings than elsewhere.⁶²⁸ Therefore, it may be unsurprising that the relative proportion of smallholders to more substantial peasants remained similar at both points using this data.

There is evidence that numerous smallholders in Bunsty were not recorded in the Hundred Rolls, and the returns for Lavendon are fragmentary, so similar analysis for Bunsty would not be representative. However, if Staine hundred is considered instead, the results are very different to Langtree. Only 21 percent of the tenants in Staine held a half-virgate or more in 1279-80, when over 60 percent had been described as *villani* in 1086. In fact, tenurial fragmentation had been so extensive in this hundred that the vast majority held five acres or less by 1279-80.

⁶²⁷ Baxter found a similar pattern when he compared Lennard's figures for holding size in the Middlesex Domesday with Kosminsky's data from the Hundred Rolls; at both points, a similar proportion of the peasantry held virgate/part-virgate holdings and a similar proportion were smallholders: S. Baxter, 'Unpublished draft of Lordship and Labour chapter' (2011). However, Kosminsky's data was skewed by his reliance on the Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls, where a greater number of peasants held virgate or part-virgate holdings than in the rest of the country.

⁶²⁸ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 222-3.

Table 42 A comparison of holding size between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls: Staine

Vill	Domesday Book				Hundred Rolls							
	Villani	Villani (%)	Bordarii	Bordarii (%)	≥ 15 acres	≥ 15 acres (%)	< 15 acres	< 15 acres (%)	> 5 acres	> 5 acres %	≤ 5 acres	≤ 5 acres (%)
Bottisham	25	67.6	12	32.4	24	16.3	123	83.7	30	20.4	117	79.6
Great Wilbraham	13	52.0	12	48.0	38	42.9	50.5	57.1	50.5	57.1	38	42.9
Little Wilbraham	8	61.5	5	38.5	18	23.7	58	76.3	31	40.8	45	59.2
Stow-cum-Quy	13	76.5	4	23.5	8	12.3	57	87.7	21	32.3	44	67.7
Swaffham Bulbeck	16	80.0	4	20	23	29.9	54	70.1	47	61.0	30	39.0
Swaffham Prior	10	62.5	6	37.5	7	6.7	98	93.3	19	18.1	86	81.9
Total	85	66.4	43	33.6	118	21.1	440.5	78.9	198.5	35.5	360	64.5

In Staine in 1086, the *villani* had made up the majority of the population (66 percent); by the later date, a similar percentage (65 percent) held five acres or fewer. This hundred had experienced a high rate of population increase. Manors had fragmented, so there were a greater number of manorial lords resulting in a higher proportion of the arable being kept in demesne. Clearly, assarting had not kept pace with population change in this hundred, and a much larger population in the late thirteenth century was living off a similar amount of arable land to the Domesday population.

Calculations of the minimum amount of land required to support a family and produce a saleable surplus to meet rental and taxation requirements would suggest that the population in Staine in 1279-80 was not sustainable. Dyer's reconstruction of peasant budgets suggests that a customary peasant with a virgate would have been able to supply his family's needs and produce a surplus. However, a peasant with a half-virgate would have been more vulnerable; in bad years, a half-virgater may have slipped into debt and had to seek additional wage labour. Smallholders could not have supported a family from their lands, and would have needed to find at least 130 days' work a year to survive.⁶²⁹ The number of peasants that fell within this bracket in Staine would have made it difficult for them to find such regular work.

However, Dyer's model presumes that peasant lands would yield at similar rates to comparable demesnes, but more recent work has shown that peasant tenements were probably more productive, because they were worked more intensively and more willingly than demesnes that relied on a mixture of labour services and wage

⁶²⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, 110-8. See also Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 145-50.

labourers.⁶³⁰ In addition, Dyer's model presumes that each tenement would have been supporting a family of the same size, when Razi's study of Halesowen, Worcestershire, shows that smallholders tended to have smaller families, either through later marriage, attempts to control fertility, or higher death rates.⁶³¹ Therefore, each tenement in Staine may have been supporting smaller families than the holdings in Langtree. It is also significant that the majority of the population in Staine were free, and Dyer calculated his budgets based on customary tenants who tended to be more heavily burdened.

Moreover, as Postan pointed out, 'the poverty or prosperity of families was not entirely or always a matter of acres'.⁶³² The arable land in Staine was fertile and the peasants had access to common heath and fenlands. The lodes that cut across the hundred provided easy access to the River Cam for transport and trade. The growth of a new settlement at Reach, which became a moderately important port with its own fair, suggests that there was room and demand for commercial enterprise and expansion, despite the proliferation of smallholdings. There seems little doubt that the peasantry in Staine would have been vulnerable in the late thirteenth century, but studies have shown that smallholders could be innovative and resilient.⁶³³

This comparison of trends in holding size in Langtree and Staine again emphasises variety of experience. It suggests that, as would be expected, in regions that experienced a population increase there was less land per head by the late thirteenth century and that assarting had not kept pace with population increase. In some ways it is artificial to

⁶³⁰ B. Dodds, 'Demesne and tithe: peasant agriculture in the late middle ages', *AgHR*, 56 (2008), 130-2; A. Sapoznik, 'The Productivity of Peasant Agriculture: Oakington, Cambridgeshire, 1360-99', *EcHR*, 66, 2 (2013), 518-544; Bailey, 'Peasant Welfare', 228-30; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 77-9.

⁶³¹ Razi, *Life, Marriage*, 56-8, 86. See also: Schofield, *Peasant*, 119-23. Dyer later acknowledges this variable: Dyer, *Standards*, 134, 186. For criticisms of Razi's study see: J. Bennett, 'Spouses, Siblings and Surnames', *JBS*, 23 (1984), 44-5.

⁶³² Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 141-2.

⁶³³ Campbell, 'Population Pressure', 98-9; Campbell, 'Population Change', 191-2.

ignore the categorisations in the Hundred Rolls, but it seems likely that on a day to day basis holding size would have been the key determinant in an individual's relative status. Moreover, it has implications for the meaning of the Domesday categorisations and the subsequent development of tenurial and personal status. If the continuity in Langtree is genuine, it suggests that both the free and unfree virgate and part-virgate holders in the thirteenth century were holding lands which had been held by the Domesday *villani*. In turn, this suggests that the Domesday *villani* were a disparate group, and thus their successors found themselves in different legal, economic and social positions.

A direct progression from the Domesday peasantry to the peasantry in the Hundred Rolls cannot be traced, because local differences in environment, lordship and community affected how their terms of tenure and status developed. In some cases, probable connections between the peasantry of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries can be suggested, but in most the development of tenurial terms is unclear. Considering the time lapse between the two surveys, and the extensive change across those two centuries, this is unsurprising. In fact, the examples where continuity can be traced may be artificial, as the surveys record simplified versions of communities, and fail to represent the reality on the ground and the true extent of subinfeudation. It is likely that the reality in the eleventh century and in the thirteenth was more complex than the surveys suggest. There was more continuity in Langtree in terms of lordship, population and holding size than elsewhere, but the plethora of terms used to describe the peasantry in this hundred in the Hundred Rolls indicates there were degrees of social, legal and economic status even in this hundred by the late thirteenth century.

2.4 Conclusion

By necessity, a study of the medieval peasantry relies on documents created for their social superiors. The result can often be an artificial picture. Whilst it seems certain that the categorisations applied to the peasantry in Domesday and the Hundred Rolls meant something, it seems far from certain that they marked any hard and fast divisions within the communities themselves. The meaning of a particular categorisation and the significance of legal status would have varied from place to place, dependent upon lordship, environment and opportunities for peasant independence, and relative to the experience of one's neighbours.

Certain forces and trends were national, but the way that they impacted upon communities would have been influenced by local factors.⁶³⁴ The evidence collected here supports general narratives that suggest there was fragmentation of manors, fragmentation of peasant holdings and intense population pressure across much of the country, but it was not experienced equally everywhere. There was dramatic population growth in Ipsden, Langtree, but stagnation in the rest of this hundred. There were numerous small manors held by local lords in Blackbourn, but William de Criketot held the large manor of Ashfield in the late thirteenth century, that occupied a similar area to the lands held by his distant ancestor Robert Blund in Domesday. Across all of the case studies, there were peasants with little or no land and others with larger tenements, regardless of legal status. The variety illustrated within these hundreds cannot easily be fitted within a general narrative or categorised as a typical experience. As with the lords considered above, the 'peasantry' were a heterogeneous group, even more so because of the time period covered by this study.

⁶³⁴ Dyer, *Standards*, 139-40.

Land was vitally important, and the lives of the majority would have revolved around it. Thus, the tenurial relationships between peasants and their lords would have been crucial in influencing how peasants lived their lives. However, just considering landholding structures and terms of tenure does not give an accurate picture of peasant experience. It fails to take account of other groups and communities that they belonged to and other activities that they engaged in. Therefore, the next section will look beyond Domesday and the Hundred Rolls and draw upon other surviving evidence to illuminate the roles and responsibilities of the peasantry in their locality, and how far they identified with the wider communities to which they belonged.

3 Communities and Networks

The search for horizontal ties in medieval society has become a common theme, partially as a reaction against the focus on vertical ties of lordship, and partially because of a realisation that collective activity was fundamental, both for everyday life and for the functioning of the king's government. Studies have worked within various boundaries, considering the peasantry in their manors, vills and parishes,⁶³⁵ the gentry as part of a county community,⁶³⁶ and the 'community of the realm'.⁶³⁷

'Community' is a slippery concept; Christine Carpenter has stated that the word should be banned from academic writing altogether, as it oversimplifies a complex series of networks and relationships.⁶³⁸ Nonetheless, it still seems useful as a way to approach a study of local society. Genicot explicitly chose to use the word 'community' over any other for collectivities, defining it as 'a group offering some specificity and being conscious of it.'⁶³⁹ Reynolds also argued that a community is a self-conscious group which 'defines itself by engaging in collective activities.' These activities are generally determined by shared values and norms, and interactions between members are reciprocal and direct, 'rather than being mediated through individuals and rulers.'⁶⁴⁰ The study of communities can lead to an emphasis on cooperation and solidarity, whilst discord and stratification within groups is ignored. However, Schofield has called for a

⁶³⁵ Britton, *Community*; W.O. Ault, 'The Vill in Medieval England', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 126, 3 (1982), 188-211; M. Pimsler, 'Solidarity in the Medieval Village? The Evidence of Personal Pledging at Elton, Huntingdonshire', *JBS*, 17, 1 (1977), 1-11; C. Dyer, 'The English Medieval Village Community and its Decline', *JBS*, 33, 4 (1994), 407-29; Z. Razi, 'Family, Land and the Village Community in Later Medieval England', *P&P*, 93 (1981), 3-36.

⁶³⁶ J. Maddicott, 'The County Community and the Making of Public Opinion in the Fourteenth Century', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 28 (1978), 27-43; C.E. Moreton, 'A Social Gulf? The Upper and Lesser Gentry of late Medieval England', *JMH*, 17, 3 (1991), 255-62; N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), 106-67; N. Saul, 'Conflict and Consensus in English Local Society' in *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), 38-58.

⁶³⁷ For example: S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford, 1984), 250-331.

⁶³⁸ C. Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *JBS*, 33, 4 (1994), 340-80.

⁶³⁹ L. Genicot, *Rural Communities in the Medieval West* (Baltimore, 1990), 4-5.

⁶⁴⁰ Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 2.

‘more nuanced conception of community’ that explicitly acknowledges difference and conflict within communities.⁶⁴¹ Moreover, it must be accepted that a community could be fluid and would rarely have an exclusive or permanent hold on an individual’s loyalties.

The term is problematic in a medieval context, as it is generally difficult or impossible to discern the thoughts and values of the population, and to identify how they viewed themselves and the groups to which they belonged. The study of medieval communities must be approached through administrative units because these are the groupings for which evidence survives. However, these groupings – the manor, vill, hundred, county – were essentially artificial units, which may have had little relevance to daily life. Nevertheless, the administrative processes that made use of these units would have provided arenas for interaction, which could in turn have encouraged the development of a sense of communal identity. The surviving evidence makes it clear that these units were viewed as identifiable, defined groups, at least by the kings, lords and administrators who made use of them; it was presumed that they had sufficient internal structures to enable them to fulfil the obligations placed upon them.

Despite difficulties in defining and quantifying the significance of communities, some historians have been prepared to accept that local society was populated by active, conscious communities. Hatcher’s emphasis on the protective power of custom for unfree tenants allowed communities a central role, arguing that village and manorial communities actively ‘nurtured and fostered’ custom.⁶⁴² Moreover, Dyer argued that the peasantry, despite lacking power and agency as individuals, could have ‘significant

⁶⁴¹ Schofield, *Peasant*, 5.

⁶⁴² Hatcher, ‘Serfdom’, 23. See also: Schofield, *Peasant*, 16, 41-4.

influence' when acting collectively as members of a community.⁶⁴³ Whether that influence was used for the good of the entire local population or just an oligarchy of the wealthiest and most dominant peasants would have depended on relationships and power-balances within the community. For example, Schofield has shown that the manorial elites in Hinderclay, Blackburn, often took advantage of their poorer neighbours, rather than acting in the shared interest of the entire manor.⁶⁴⁴

In her study of two Suffolk manors, Phillips approached the concept of community in two ways: firstly, attempting to identify a 'sense of belonging'; and secondly, by tracing evidence of interactions in the manorial court.⁶⁴⁵ Though there are problems with equating interactions in administrative capacities with a sense of community, they do provide evidence of one way in which communities could be nurtured within these administrative structures. Moreover, Tönnies' influential theories of community emphasised how the frequency of interactions could determine the intimacy of relationships within groups.⁶⁴⁶ Where possible, this section will attempt to trace associations and consider how they fitted into a wider sense of community or belonging. Problems with the evidence mean that specific associations can often not be identified, but the procedures and structures that provided the opportunity and desire for interaction will be explored.

This section will go beyond Domesday Book and the Hundred Rolls, illuminating aspects of everyday lives that are concealed by consideration of tenurial surveys alone. As well as seeking evidence of networks and associations, the involvement of the

⁶⁴³ Dyer, *Making*, 155.

⁶⁴⁴ See Schofield, 'Dearth, Debt'; Schofield, 'Social Economy'.

⁶⁴⁵ Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 28-49, 190-226.

⁶⁴⁶ F. Tönnies, *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und gesellschaft)*, trans. C.P. Loomis (London, 1955), 11.

population in seigneurial and royal administration will be explored, and how these rights and responsibilities shaped their lives. Except for the first section considering familial associations, the rest of the study will work within administrative boundaries – the manor, vill, hundred, honour and county – with the proviso that these units rarely marked the full extent of an individual's horizons. Whilst accepting that these administrative units provided the frameworks in which people were brought together and interacted regularly, it will be shown that other factors could be more important, and people were influenced by a complex mixture of emotional attachments and proximity alongside administration and lordship.

3.1 The Family Community⁶⁴⁷

Previously it was presumed that living within extended family units was the norm in the Middle Ages.⁶⁴⁸ It has now been shown that most people lived with just their nuclear family, but this was not the universal experience.⁶⁴⁹ Accidents of life and death could leave people without children, parents or spouses at any time, and the strategies employed to counter this were various. Many people remarried after the loss of a spouse, but some ended up living alone, whilst others joined other households.

This variety, along with the lack of direct evidence for family life, makes it difficult to define the terms of reference for a study of the family. Laslett's definition of the family as the 'co-resident family group' (including servants, but excluding relatives who did

⁶⁴⁷ This section focuses on the peasant family. For the aristocratic family, see: D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900-1300* (Harlow, 2005), 87-170; Green, *Aristocracy*, 329-60.

⁶⁴⁸ P. Laslett, 'Introduction: The history of the family' in *Household and Family in Past Time*, ed. P. Laslett with R. Wall (Cambridge, 1972), 73.

⁶⁴⁹ Laslett, 'Introduction', 62-73; H.E. Hallam, 'Some Thirteenth-Century Censuses', *EcHR*, 10, 3 (1958), 352-3; Z. Razi, 'The myth of the immutable English family', *P&P*, 140, 1 (1993), 3-44; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 136-9; Schofield, *Peasant*, 81-7.

not live under the same roof) seems too restrictive.⁶⁵⁰ Moreover, as Faith has pointed out, there has been a preoccupation with the family's relationship with land and inheritance, without placing these practices in the context of the social attitudes they embodied.⁶⁵¹ Land was vitally important during this period, but it seems overly pessimistic to view family relationships purely in an economic sense. Household economies were not 'exclusive' economies, and they were not confined only to those who could contribute what they consumed.⁶⁵² The majority of evidence we have only presents family relationships in terms of inheritance and landholding, but ties of affection should not be dismissed.⁶⁵³

3.1.1 An Economic Unit

Agrarian conditions required family cooperation at the very least, if not community cooperation more widely. As Hanawalt has argued, only the very poorest in society could survive as individuals, and they were not envied their position.⁶⁵⁴ Most women named independently in the Hundred Rolls would have been widows; this stage in a woman's lifecycle has been perceived as one of independence, but it could be a time of economic hardship.⁶⁵⁵ Nine of the forty named *cottarii* in the Staine Hundred Roll were women (nearly 25 percent), when women made up only 13 percent of named landholders in the hundred overall. In Langtree, women made up 15 percent of the named smallholders, but only 10 percent of the named landholders as a whole.

⁶⁵⁰ R.M. Smith, *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), ix-x.

⁶⁵¹ R.J. Faith, 'Peasant Families and Inheritance Customs in Medieval England', *AgHR*, 14 (1966), 77.

⁶⁵² P.R. Schofield, 'Economy' in *A Cultural History of Childhood and the Family in the Middle Ages*, ed. L.J. Wilkinson (Oxford, 2010), 59-60.

⁶⁵³ B.A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bind: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (New York, 1986), 10.

⁶⁵⁴ Hanawalt, *Ties that Bind*, 9.

⁶⁵⁵ Dyer, 'Poverty', 43-4, 62.

Peasants with larger holdings, and particularly those who owed heavy labour services, would have struggled to farm their land without family support. In 1296, each unfree virgater in Hanslope, Bunsty, owed approximately 136 days' labour a year, 129 of these providing two men rather than one.⁶⁵⁶ Without the aid of family members it seems unlikely that these peasants would have been able to farm their own land as well, particularly during the harvest period, unless they employed labourers to help them. The relatively large size of their holdings in a local context would have made these villeins some of the most prosperous peasants in Bunsty, but those without help or with young families to support may have struggled to maintain their holdings.⁶⁵⁷ Wives and children would have been expected to perform other tasks to supplement the family's income. Manorial court rolls show that women were particularly prominent as brewers.⁶⁵⁸ For example, the wife of Hervey Smith was frequently amerced for brewing in the Rickinghall court rolls, but on occasion Hervey himself was fined, suggesting that this was a joint family enterprise.⁶⁵⁹

3.1.2 Partible Inheritance

The need for familial cooperation would have been even more intense in regions of partible inheritance, where holdings either needed to be divided permanently or administered by the group.⁶⁶⁰ Blackbourn is the only hundred within this study where partible inheritance was widely practiced. Most of the peasant holdings in Blackbourn in the Hundred Rolls were small but this cannot be attributed to partible inheritance

⁶⁵⁶ TNA C133/86/1; calendared at *CIPM*, iii, 477.

⁶⁵⁷ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 127-8; Dyer, *Standards*, 115-7.

⁶⁵⁸ P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1800* (London, 1983), 21-4.

⁶⁵⁹ For example, Hervey was amerced in 1260; his wife was amerced in 1259-60 and 1261: BL Add Roll 63378-63381.

⁶⁶⁰ For partible inheritance see Pollock and Maitland, *English Law*, ii, 245-70; Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 245-9; G.C. Homans, 'Partible Inheritance of Villagers' Holdings', *EcHR*, 8, 1 (1937), 48-56; Faith, 'Peasant Families'; J. Mumby, 'The descent of family land in later Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research*, 86, 225 (2011), 399-416; R.M. Smith, 'Families and their land in an area of partible inheritance: Redgrave, Suffolk 1260-1320' in *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle*, ed. R.M. Smith (Cambridge, 1984), 135-196.

alone: nearby Staine hundred, where impartible inheritance was the norm, also contained fragmented holdings in the Hundred Rolls. The impact of partible inheritance on landholding structures should not be exaggerated, as it would have been relatively rare for a landholder to have several surviving children.⁶⁶¹ But it is also possible that surveys underplay its importance by just recording the name of the ‘lead parcener’, the individual responsible for ensuring that all services were fulfilled.⁶⁶²

In the Blackbourn Hundred Rolls, suits of court were allocated to holdings in small fractions, but in the late twelfth-century *Kalendar* each suit is described as a whole, even though responsibility for it was often shared between more than one individual, such as the suit owed by Reymund *et socii* in Bardwell.⁶⁶³ Did this mean that Reymund was ultimately responsible for the suit? Or perhaps all the parcnens took it in turns, as Domesday Book describes the brothers in Candleshor wapentake, Lincolnshire, doing when they owed military service.⁶⁶⁴ Either way, such organisation required a degree of sophistication and must have prepared these peasants for roles within royal and seigneurial administration.⁶⁶⁵

Sometimes parcnens decided not to take up their claim in a holding. Undoubtedly this decision encompassed a combination of family pressure to maintain the viability of a holding, as well as personal choice. When William Hawys, a landholder in Walsham-le-Willows, Blackbourn, died in 1329, he left five adult sons to inherit. Two of the brothers renounced all claim, and a third assigned his share to another brother in return

⁶⁶¹ Faith, ‘Peasant Families’, 80.

⁶⁶² Pollock and Maitland, *English law*, ii, 246-7, 264; Homans, ‘The Frisians’, 193.

⁶⁶³ *Kalendar*, 35.

⁶⁶⁴ GDB 375v (Lincolnshire, CS,38). Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 247.

⁶⁶⁵ J. Williamson, ‘Norfolk: Thirteenth Century’ in *The Peasant Land Market in Medieval England*, ed. P.D.A. Harvey (Oxford, 1984), 50.

for annual renders of wheat, barley, beans and peas.⁶⁶⁶ Brothers were not always prepared to renounce their claim in the interest of maintaining the family holding, however. At the 1240 Suffolk eyre, Henry son of Durand admitted disseising each of his four brothers of four acres and one fifth of a messuage in Blackbourn.⁶⁶⁷ When each brother took up his part, a substantial holding of twenty acres was reduced to five holdings of four acres in just one generation. The likelihood of five brothers surviving to inherit was small, so few families would have faced the dilemma that William Hawys' and Durand's sons faced. When they did it should not be presumed that some brothers were routinely encouraged to renounce their claim, and there are numerous cases of parceners coming to court together to sue for their inheritance.⁶⁶⁸

Did different inheritance practices lead to different family structures? Studies have shown that the nuclear family was predominant in regions of partible inheritance, as much as elsewhere.⁶⁶⁹ It is possible however, that partible inheritance would have enabled families to retain closer links with wider networks of kin. In regions of impartible inheritance, families often tried to provide non-inheriting siblings with some land,⁶⁷⁰ but many must have needed to seek land or work elsewhere. Hallam has shown that there was considerably higher emigration from the manor of Weston, Lincolnshire, where partible inheritance was a limited practice, than there was from the nearby manor of Moulton, also in Lincolnshire, where the practice was widespread.⁶⁷¹ However, this may not have always been the case. A comparison of the manors of Halesowen,

⁶⁶⁶ *Walsham-le-Willows*, 1303-50, 122.

⁶⁶⁷ *Suffolk Civil Pleas*, 813.

⁶⁶⁸ For example: *Suffolk Civil Pleas*, 552, 652, 882, 992 (1240 eyre). TNA JUST1/820, m20: see case re. William and Thomas sons of Ralph in Hepworth, Blackbourn (1257-8 eyre). BL Add Roll 63402 m3: see case re. John Bonde and his brothers (1286 Rickinghall manor court roll).

⁶⁶⁹ Hanawalt, *Ties that Bound*, 91-2; Hallam, 'Thirteenth-century censuses', 352-3; Schofield, 'Economy', 58.

⁶⁷⁰ J. Whittle, 'Individualism and the Family-Land Bond: A Reassessment of Land Transfer Patterns among the English Peasantry c. 1270-1580', *P&P*, 160 (1998), 53; Dyer, *Standards*, 275, 288-9.

⁶⁷¹ Hallam, 'Thirteenth-century censuses', 356-7; Faith, 'Peasant Families', 84.

Worcestershire, where impartible inheritance was practiced, and Redgrave, Suffolk, where partible inheritance was practiced, has shown that those in the former manor were more likely to have kin living in the manor than those in Redgrave. This has been explained by differences in wealth. Peasants in Halesowen were relatively rich, and thus more likely to be able to set up non-inheriting kin, whilst in Redgrave, though theoretically all sons had a claim to land, in reality this community of poor smallholders could not support extended families, and many had to leave the manor.⁶⁷²

It is impossible to reconstruct detailed family trees for the peasants in the Hundred Rolls, so a comparison of extended family networks cannot be attempted. However, a comparison of bynames may give some indication. Bynames were not fixed, and even if they were they would only provide information about patrilineal ties.⁶⁷³ Moreover, this simple comparison does not distinguish between types of bynames, particularly problematic in the case of locative and occupational names, as they could be shared by numerous individuals without indicating familial relationships.⁶⁷⁴ Nonetheless, it may be significant that in Stanton, the only vill for which the fragmented Blackbourn Hundred Rolls seem relatively complete, 48 percent of the named landholders shared a byname with at least one other landholder in the vill. By contrast, in Bunsty and Langtree, both in regions of impartible inheritance, 31 percent and 28 percent respectively shared a byname with another landholder in their vill. This does not prove that the Blackbourn peasants were able to maintain closer ties with their extended

⁶⁷² Razi, 'Family, Land', 8-9; Razi, 'Myth', 16; Smith, 'Families and their land', 194; Schofield, *Peasant*, 88, 119-27.

⁶⁷³ R. McKinley, *Norfolk and Suffolk Surnames in the Middle Ages* (London, 1975), 7-8, 15-6; Hallam, 'Thirteenth-century censuses', 348. For occupational bynames see: P.D.A. Harvey, 'Non-Agrarian Activities in Twelfth-century English Estate Surveys' in *England in the Twelfth Century, proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1990) 103-7, 109-10.

⁶⁷⁴ Bennett, 'Spouses', 36-43.

families, but it may suggest that more people were able to remain resident in their vill of birth.

3.1.3 Family affection and resentment

Evidence of proximity does not necessarily prove that there were strong emotional ties between family members. Bennett's study of Bridgstock in the fourteenth century focused on the Kroyl family. Henry Kroyl's closest associate in the manor court was his brother John, but neither Henry nor John associated even once with their other brother Robert.⁶⁷⁵ For Bennett, this was because of their different social status. Robert had received less land than both Henry and John, and thus belonged to a different level of village society. This would suggest that economic difference could preclude family members from associating despite regional proximity. Whilst not proving that all social ties were cut as well, such a situation could easily generate resentment.

Evidence of resentment is manifest in cases between siblings that appear in court records. Some cases were taken to court just to get an official record of agreements, but at times real disagreement is evident. In 1227, Christine de la Lee brought a case against her half-sister Alice and Alice's mother Orengia, claiming land that they held in Mapledurham, Langtree. It was found that Emma, Christine's mother, had died seised of the land, so the land should have descended to Christine; Alice had no right to the land, because it had descended from Christine's mother, rather than their mutual father Richard.⁶⁷⁶ Alice responded by questioning her half-sister's legitimacy, but presumably the ecclesiastical courts found that Christine was legitimate, because in 1241 she still held the land in Mapledurham, and had enfeoffed tenants on six acres there. This is only

⁶⁷⁵ J. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (Oxford, 1987), 48-64, 50, 53-4.

⁶⁷⁶ *CRR*, xiii, 61-2.

known because the dispute between the sisters was ongoing: fourteen years after Christine had successfully claimed the land from Alice, Alice returned to the courts to stake her claim once more.⁶⁷⁷ Alice was unsuccessful, but the fact that she decided to return to court indicates that the issues between the sisters had not been resolved.

Despite numerous disputes over inheritance, there are very few cases of intra-familial violence recorded in the three case studies.⁶⁷⁸ The most common, though still not prolific, type of intra-familial violence was that of husbands against their wives.⁶⁷⁹ In 1285, John de Coldecot killed his wife Edith in Langtree hundred, before fleeing and being outlawed.⁶⁸⁰ In 1272, the Bunsty jurors reported that Walter Golding had fled imprisonment after killing his wife Matilda, but was later recaptured and died in prison.⁶⁸¹ The 1287 Suffolk eyre records that John Wastel struck his wife Christiana in Ixworth, Blackbourn, leading to her death three days later. John fled and abjured the realm.⁶⁸² Also in 1287, John Fuller killed his wife Alice in the fields of Barnham, Blackbourn.⁶⁸³ He was caught and hanged through the suit of Alice's brother William. The 1240 Blackbourn case of Ralph Godbarlich, who struck his wife on the head with a hammer, is instructive regarding medieval attitudes to domestic violence.⁶⁸⁴ Ralph fled, but was told that he could return, because his wife had lived for eight days after the incident, and a pre-existing illness had killed her, rather than the hammer blow. These cases are less likely to reflect disputes over land and inheritance than those between other family members, because husbands and wives could not be each other's heir.

⁶⁷⁷ *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, 434.

⁶⁷⁸ B.A. Hanawalt-Westman, 'The Peasant Family and Crime in Fourteenth-Century England', *JBS*, 13, 2 (1974), 1-5; L. Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Woodbridge, 2007), 158.

⁶⁷⁹ J.B. Given, *Society and Homicide in Thirteenth-Century England* (Stanford, 1977), 56-8; Hanawalt-Westman, 'Family and Crime', 5-6, 9; Wilkinson, *Women*, 157-8.

⁶⁸⁰ TNA JUST1/705, m5.

⁶⁸¹ TNA JUST1/60, m25d.

⁶⁸² TNA JUST1/827, m40.

⁶⁸³ TNA JUST1/827, m40.

⁶⁸⁴ TNA JUST1/818, m54.

Nonetheless, economic difficulties may have exacerbated other tensions, and both John Fuller and John de Coldecot had no chattels. This was not always the case though, as John Wastel had 48s 6d chattels, a substantial amount.⁶⁸⁵

Disputes over landholding and violence between spouses should not be viewed as the typical medieval experience. The court rolls do not record how Isabella Wauter of Stoke Goldington, Bunsty, felt when she found her husband Walter's dead body in the River Ouse in March 1378. As he had been missing since he fell into the water the previous November, one suspects that she felt relief as well as grief.⁶⁸⁶ A case discussed by Hanawalt may shed some light on Isabella's state. When Hugh the Cobbler of Blundham failed to return home, his wife searched for him every day for nearly three weeks until she found him drowned in the river, 'because she was troubled by his delay'; perhaps Isabella had been as troubled and desperate as Hugh's wife.⁶⁸⁷

The court records are so brief that it is impossible to glimpse the emotions behind a case, but when a body was found by a family member it may indicate that they were searching for their relative. In 1240, the homicide of two year old Robert in the fields of Knettishall, Blackbourn, was discovered by his mother Letelina.⁶⁸⁸ When Richard Boveton died of a 'falling sickness' in 1241 in Checkendon, Langtree, his mother Alditha was the first finder.⁶⁸⁹ Though these cases lack emotional insight, studies drawing upon miracle stories have illustrated the deep grief felt by parents who lost their children.⁶⁹⁰ These cases do not provide explicit evidence of emotional attachment,

⁶⁸⁵ Hanawalt-Westman, 'Family and Crime', 9.

⁶⁸⁶ *Inquests and Indictments*, 52.

⁶⁸⁷ Hanawalt, *Ties that Bound*, 86-7.

⁶⁸⁸ TNA JUST1/818, m54.

⁶⁸⁹ *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, 902.

⁶⁹⁰ B.A. Hanawalt, 'Medievalists and the Study of Childhood', *Speculum*, 77, 2 (2002), 454-6.

but glimpses of concern in these and other sources show that such tragedies would generally have caused grief and heartache.

3.1.4 Partners in Crime

It was much more common for family members to commit crimes together, than to commit crimes against each other.⁶⁹¹ In 1247, William Marmion of Little Linford, Bunsty, appealed Stephen Miller and his son Thomas of stealing a cow from his man Henry.⁶⁹² It was, however, judged that Stephen and Thomas had been in the right, as the cow had been taken in damages owed to their lord. In the same year, Thomas claimed that he had been assaulted by William Marmion and his brother Henry, in an attack that left him deaf.⁶⁹³ This may imply that there was more to the case above than simply reclaiming damages for the lord and these incidents could represent part of an ongoing disagreement between these two families.

William and Henry Marmion were not the only brothers jointly accused of assault.⁶⁹⁴ In 1272, it was recorded that William son of Adam and Godfrey his brother had an argument with Richard son of Mabel in a tavern in Little Wilbraham, Staine, and ended up killing him. The brothers fled, but later received a pardon.⁶⁹⁵ William had chattels worth 2s whilst his brother had none; following his pardon, William was holding twelve and a half acres in 1279, whilst his brother Godfrey does not appear in the Hundred Rolls at all.⁶⁹⁶ Presumably William was the heir, but he had retained connections with

⁶⁹¹ Given, *Society and Homicide*, 41-65; Hanawalt-Westman, 'Family and Crime', 12-16.

⁶⁹² TNA JUST1/56, m35d.

⁶⁹³ On this occasion, Thomas was referred to as Thomas son of Stephen of Haversham, rather than Thomas son of Stephen Miller.

⁶⁹⁴ Other examples in Bunsty include: Nicholas de Emberton and his brother in 1247, and at least two sets of brothers were among fourteen men appealed for homicide in 1272. TNA JUST1/56, m35; JUST1/60, m25d.

⁶⁹⁵ TNA JUST1/85 m4.

⁶⁹⁶ *RH*, ii, 485a-b, 486b-487a.

his brother despite the difference in their economic status.⁶⁹⁷ If it refers to the same place, this tavern in Little Wilbraham was a hotspot for trouble, as in the same year the rolls record that Thomas son of Elias was killed there by Warin Galeyn and William Bateman. Thomas had been in the tavern with his brother Henry, indicating that he enjoyed a social relationship with his sibling.⁶⁹⁸

Families could be instrumental in helping criminals evade justice. The 1272 Cambridgeshire eyre roll records that Nicholas Clerk had killed Robert of Elingham following a dispute in the fields of Swaffham Prior, Staine. Nicholas then fled to Swaffham church.⁶⁹⁹ Fifteen days later his father Roger Maletton came armed to the church at night, along with many other men, and rescued Nicholas so that he could flee to Norfolk. Roger was prepared to risk his own safety and break the law to enable his son's escape.⁷⁰⁰ It is possible that families were instrumental in some other cases where the criminal escaped, either by helping to conceal a crime, or providing them with an escape route or supplies.

3.1.5 A family community?

Being involved in thefts or assaults were not the only activities that families engaged in jointly. Families would have needed to work together to farm their land and provide services. In 1261, John son of Hugh and Agnes his sister were working or travelling together when they fell from a boat into the River Cherwell and drowned;⁷⁰¹ though it ended in tragedy, the death of Thomas son of Elias started simply with two brothers visiting a tavern together. Such activities would have occurred every day, but are

⁶⁹⁷ This has implications for Bennett's study of the Kroyl brothers, suggesting that it is not representative to just consider interactions in the manor court. Bennett, *Women*, 48-64. See above, 235.

⁶⁹⁸ TNA JUST1/85 m4.

⁶⁹⁹ For rights of sanctuary see: *OHLE*, 396-9.

⁷⁰⁰ TNA JUST1/85, m4.

⁷⁰¹ Jobson, 'Oxfordshire Eyre of 1261', 572.

concealed because the majority did not result in misfortune. Much of the evidence is anecdotal, and requires supposition to posit a sense of familial affection. But at the very least the cases provide evidence of familial cooperation and association. This cooperation extended beyond the family however, and there is evidence of individuals working with, committing crimes with, or holding land with, others to whom they were not related. Family was important, but it did not have an exclusive hold on the loyalties of these men and women.⁷⁰²

3.2 The Manor, Vill and Parish

Though there were opportunities for peasant mobility,⁷⁰³ the majority of the peasantry would not have ventured as far beyond their local area as those who were better off.⁷⁰⁴ On a day-to-day basis, the interactions and contacts of the majority of the peasantry would have occurred within relative proximity to their homes: within their manor, vill or parish.

These three terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but each refers to a different entity. The manor was the unit of lordly estate administration; the vill of secular, royal administration; and the parish of ecclesiastical administration.⁷⁰⁵ The importance of each would have depended on many factors: the nature of lordship in the locality; the geography of the region and the layout of the manor/vill/parish; and whether the boundaries of the three units overlapped or not. Sometimes the inhabitants would have been unaware of any distinction between them, and this would have been particularly true where the boundaries of manor and vill matched, and they had their own church.

⁷⁰² Schofield, *Peasant*, 79-81.

⁷⁰³ Hilton, *English Peasantry*, 15.

⁷⁰⁴ C. Dyer, 'The Consumer and the Market in the Later Middle Ages', *EcHR*, 42, 3 (1989), 316, 319-20.

⁷⁰⁵ Bailey, *English Manor*, 7n.

The parish will be considered in more detail below, but firstly the manor and vill will be discussed. The existence of a manorial community, and the ability of a lord to manipulate it, has been seen as entirely dependent on ties within the community of the vill.⁷⁰⁶ Yet others have argued that the significance of the manorial community, and particularly the manorial court, may often have outweighed the village community.⁷⁰⁷ DeWindt argued that focusing on either manor or vill predisposed the historian to different types of study: a study of the manor revealing the peasant in his relations with the lord; a study of the village revealing the relations of the peasants with one another.⁷⁰⁸ However, it will be shown that the study of manor and vill cannot be mutually exclusive.⁷⁰⁹ The terms manor and vill cover a variety of geographical and administrative units that changed over time, and so cannot be treated uniformly, and cannot be expected to have contained a uniform type of community.

3.2.1 The Manor and the Vill

Maitland argued that the term *manerium* in Domesday referred to ‘a house against which geld is charged’.⁷¹⁰ More recently, Lewis has shown that whilst the ‘official’ Domesday meaning may have been so technical, often the word was used ‘because it was a usefully imprecise way of referring to something that existed in the real world’.⁷¹¹ The term was introduced after the Conquest to refer to pre-existing *TRE* land units, but also to new ones created by accumulation of lands under the incoming French lords.⁷¹² Extant manorial records increase in numbers through the thirteenth century and are in

⁷⁰⁶ For example see: Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 408-9; Britton, *Community*, 189-90; Dyer, ‘Medieval Village Community’, 409.

⁷⁰⁷ Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 129.

⁷⁰⁸ DeWindt, *Land and People*, 2.

⁷⁰⁹ See also: Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 84.

⁷¹⁰ *DBB*, 120.

⁷¹¹ Lewis, ‘Invention’, 130.

⁷¹² Lewis, ‘Invention’, 146-8.

relative abundance by the fourteenth; by this time the ‘manor’ was a territorial and jurisdictional unit, with tenants owing rents and services to the lord, as well as suit at his court.⁷¹³

‘Vill’ is used here as an imprecise term to describe a settlement, encompassing small, scattered farmsteads up to large, nucleated villages. Though there has been some dispute as to the validity of the term,⁷¹⁴ it is shorthand for the variety of settlement types that existed. Some vills were nucleated and self-contained, others were scattered and shared common lands with neighbouring vills.⁷¹⁵ Many vills had smaller settlements associated with them or dependent upon them, sometimes because of shared lordship and sometimes because of proximity. Some of these small settlements grew into independent settlements in their own right, whilst others became permanently incorporated into their larger neighbours. The different settlement patterns, the topography of the land, the natural resources, the size of the vill – all must have influenced the development of a sense of community. But these factors cannot be divorced from those that were directly associated with lord and manor, as the structures and type of lordship exercised would have influenced where houses were built, how the land was used and who had a right to the natural resources.

Though the three case studies represent a relatively small region of England, they still exhibit differences in land-type and settlement patterns. Settlement type and location were influenced by a complex mix of human agency and topographic, agrarian and

⁷¹³ Bailey, *English Manor*, 1-20.

⁷¹⁴ Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 103-4.

⁷¹⁵ C.J. Bond, ‘Medieval Oxfordshire Villages and their Topography: A Preliminary Discussion’ in *Medieval Villages: A Review of Current Work*, ed. D. Hooke (Oxford, 1985), 110; Beresford, *Lost Villages*, 151.

environmental reality.⁷¹⁶ Langtree hundred in the Oxfordshire Chilterns was typified by steep slopes, woodland and small fields.⁷¹⁷ The terrain encouraged the growth of isolated farmsteads and common-edge settlements, rather than nucleated villages.⁷¹⁸ Bunsty fell within the fertile river valley of the Great Ouse, so large, nucleated, highly populated settlements would be expected. However, this region was also characterised by small and dispersed settlements because of the amount of woodland in the area.⁷¹⁹ The double-hundred of Blackbourn is harder to characterise, as it stretched from the infertile Breckland region with sparser settlement, through to the more densely populated fertile lands that characterised the High Suffolk region.⁷²⁰ The south-eastern High Suffolk part of Blackbourn, like much of the rest of Suffolk, was characterised by scattered settlement. By contrast, settlements in the Breckland region of north-western Blackbourn tended towards nucleation.⁷²¹

Thus, none of the case studies were exclusively characterised by the highly nucleated villages that have been treated as typical in medieval England. However, this was for different reasons in each place, highlighting the ‘complex interplay of physical, social, political and economic factors at work’ in the making of the landscape.⁷²²

The differences in the landscape will have influenced the manorial structures that developed, as well as being shaped by them in turn. However, though both Langtree and

⁷¹⁶ Many historical geographers have emphasised human agency over these other factors: Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape*, 91-3; A. Everitt, *Landscape and Community in England* (London, 1983), 6-9, 15. More recently, Williamson emphasised the significance of the environment itself in influencing peoples’ choices: Williamson, *Environment*, 1-4.

⁷¹⁷ *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 1.

⁷¹⁸ Green, *Changing Landscape*, 86-7; Emery, *Oxfordshire*, 97.

⁷¹⁹ Lewis, Mitchell-Fox, Dyer, *Village*, 55-7; Lewis, ‘Medieval Rural Settlement’, 96-7; Foard, ‘Medieval Woodland’, 62.

⁷²⁰ Postgate, ‘Field systems of East Anglia’, 284-5; Bailey, *Marginal*, 100.

⁷²¹ Williamson, *Environment*, 148, 190-1.

⁷²² Reed, *Buckinghamshire Landscape*, 97.

Bunsty were characterised by dispersed settlement, manorial structures developed differently in each hundred. In Langtree, both in Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, most vills contained just one manor but in Bunsty most were manorially divided by the late thirteenth century. This shows that landscape or lordship cannot be considered alone to compare how, why, or if communities developed within manors and vills. Different geographical characteristics existed in each case study, but all exhibited mixed settlement patterns. However, the lack of nucleated settlements did not mean that the same type of lordship existed in each place, and in Langtree manors still generally coincided with vill boundaries, unlike in Bunsty or Blackbourn, a difference that was more pronounced in the thirteenth century than it had been in the eleventh.

3.2.2 Agricultural Practices

Postan argued that the peasantry would rarely have been able to afford their own ploughs, so they would have needed to join together with their neighbours.⁷²³ The Domesday evidence supports this contention. In most cases in the three hundreds there were more peasants than there were ploughs. For example, eight *villani* and three *bordarii* shared two ploughs at Checkendon, Langtree,⁷²⁴ and half a plough was shared by six *bordarii* at Barnham, Blackbourn.⁷²⁵ These entries do not provide any information about how the ploughs were shared, but they imply that they were the mutual responsibility of the peasantry in each place. Later evidence describing labour services also implies shared equipment. For example, in the Hundred Rolls, the free sokemen of Swaffham Prior, Staine, had to join with their neighbours to provide a cart and plough for their labour services.⁷²⁶ There is little explicit evidence of peasants borrowing equipment because such arrangements would only be mentioned in manorial

⁷²³ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 52-4. See also Dyer, *Lords*, 360.

⁷²⁴ GDB 160 (Oxfordshire, 43,2).

⁷²⁵ LDB 330v (Suffolk, 7,1).

⁷²⁶ *RH*, ii, 485a.

records if they had led to some form of dispute.⁷²⁷ Nonetheless, it seems likely that smallholders in particular would have needed to pool resources; this would have become even more necessary across this period in the regions that saw a high population increase and fragmentation of landholdings.

Open field systems also encouraged interaction and cooperation. In the open field system, an individual's lands were dispersed in strips across the fields, amongst those of their neighbours; because of the lack of permanent dividers between strips, a lack of cooperation could have led to damage, encroachment and theft.⁷²⁸ A chirograph of 1241 describes a half-virgate of land held by Ermengard de Bidun in Lathbury, Bunsty. The half-virgate was held in twelve different portions scattered amongst other people's lands, rather than as one discrete parcel.⁷²⁹ The scattering of holdings would arguably have been inconvenient and made the running of an individual's farm less efficient.⁷³⁰ However, it also meant that each landholder had an equal share of the best and worst land, and provided insurance against damage to crops.⁷³¹

The open field system was not dominant in these case studies, however. Even in Bunsty hundred the practice was not universal across all vills; for example, the manor of Snelson in Lavendon had a separate field system to the other manors.⁷³² Moreover, the dispersed settlement and extent of woodland in Langtree hundred meant that communal farming practices were more limited in this region than they were in the rest of

⁷²⁷ Hilton, *English Peasantry*, 48-51.

⁷²⁸ M. Bailey, 'Beyond the Midland field system: the determinants of common rights over the arable in medieval England', *AgHR*, 58, 2 (2010), 157.

⁷²⁹ *FoF Buckinghamshire*, i, 77.

⁷³⁰ Bailey, 'Beyond the Midland Field System', 160.

⁷³¹ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 54.

⁷³² Brown and Everson, 'Earthworks at Lavendon', 57.

Oxfordshire.⁷³³ In the 'High Suffolk' part of Blackbourn, individual parcels of land tended to be larger, and both the demesne and tenants' holdings tended to be clustered within certain parts of the open fields, not dispersed throughout them. This meant that communal arrangements had only a 'limited importance' in this region.⁷³⁴ However, in the Breckland region strips were more dispersed, as a type of 'risk aversion' in the less fertile lands.⁷³⁵ Bailey associated the practice of open field farming and communal management of lands with the need to make the most of fallow lands for grazing. The mixed farming practiced in the Breckland meant that the use of the fallow for grazing was at a premium, and the high propensity of soils in this region to leach nutrients meant that the manuring of the fallows, regulated by the fold-course system, was particularly valuable. The fold-course system and grazing rights required some communal organisation and regulation of farming, which was less necessary in the High Suffolk region, where cattle were more common than sheep and fold rights were relatively unusual.⁷³⁶

Arguably, in Langtree and much of Blackbourn where holdings were less likely to be dispersed amongst open fields, the sense of a communal vill identity may have been reduced; they would have had less interest in their neighbours' agricultural practices, and reduced opportunity for shared endeavours. But that is not to say that cooperation was unimportant in these regions, as irresponsible farming could impact upon someone else's productivity, even if land was farmed in discrete parcels.⁷³⁷ There are examples in the manorial court rolls of Walsham-le-Willows and Rickingham, Blackbourn, and the

⁷³³ *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 13. See also D. Roden, 'Field systems of the Chiltern Hills and their Environs' in *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, eds. A.R.H. Baker and R.A. Butlin (Cambridge, 1973), 325-76.

⁷³⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 108-9; Smith, 'Families and their land', 140.

⁷³⁵ Bailey, *Marginal*, 50-1.

⁷³⁶ Bailey, 'Beyond the Midland Field System', 163-7; M. Bailey, 'The form, function and evolution of irregular field systems in Suffolk, c.1300 to c.1550', *AgHR*, 57, 1 (2009), 19-25.

⁷³⁷ C. Dyer, 'The Economy and Society' in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England*, ed. N. Saul (Oxford, 1997), 144-6.

earl of Cornwall's accounts for Langtree of groups and individuals being fined for allowing their animals to wander loose, indicating that even in these regions there were regulations that were supposed to be adhered to.⁷³⁸

3.2.3 Landholding

Proximity, and the increased opportunity for frequent contact that this encouraged, was crucial in the development of a sense of community.⁷³⁹ Settlement was not tightly nucleated in any of the case studies, but those living in the same vill or manor would still have lived within relative proximity, encouraging more frequent interaction. The significance of the manor or vill would be enhanced if an individual held land exclusively within one of these units; the more widespread their tenorial interests, then arguably the less important these units would become.

Hanslope in Bunsty hundred was held ultimately by William de Beauchamp, but there were also three sub-manors in this vill. Though some tenants held from more than one mesne lord, none of the peasants held lands directly from William de Beauchamp as well as from one of the sub-manors. Thus, in terms of landholding the manors were distinct from one another. When separate manors had been formed more recently, overlap was more likely. Peter of Goldington died in 1252, and his manor in Stoke Goldington, Bunsty, was shared between two of his sisters and their husbands;⁷⁴⁰ several men held lands from both lords in 1279-80. In such circumstances it seems unlikely that the division of this manor would have also marked the division of the community, though it is possible that it may have done so over time.

⁷³⁸ For example: *Walsham-le-Willows, 1303-50*, 28-31; BL Add Roll 63401, 2d (Rickinghall, 1285-6); *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296-7*, ed. L.M. Midgley (London, 1942-5), 126.

⁷³⁹ Tönnies, *Community*, 11; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', 343.

⁷⁴⁰ *CCR*, 1254-6, 202.

There was extensive manorial fragmentation in Staine hundred, and here it was much more common for peasants to hold land from more than one manor in the same vill, than it was for them to have tenurial interests that crossed vill boundaries. Twenty-two of 106 tenants in Swaffham Prior in the Hundred Rolls held lands from more than one lord in this vill, but only nine held lands in other vills in Staine. John Burton's manor crossed the boundary of Swaffham Prior and Swaffham Bulbeck, yet none of his tenants held from him in both vills, even though some of them held land from other lords in their own vill. An extent of c.1300 for the manor of Wykes in Bardwell, Blackbourn, shows that even the unfree *custumarii* on that manor held from other lords. In both Staine and Blackbourn the manors were generally smaller and the vills more divided; this would imply that there were weaker, more fluid manorial structures, reflected in the extent of cross-manorial holding. This seems to have been less pronounced in Langtree and Bunsty, but this was also because people held their land in larger pieces so fewer had accumulated small bits from other lords. What is particularly interesting across all these hundreds is that it seems to have been much more common for peasants to hold land from more than one lord within the same vill, than it was to hold land across vill boundaries.

3.2.4 Courts and meetings

Over this period the meetings of manorial courts became more formalised, and from the thirteenth century we have some surviving records of their proceedings.⁷⁴¹ Though we lack records of vill assemblies, it seems likely that they also took place. Regular meetings, whether formal or informal, could be instrumental in encouraging a sense of community, and reinforcing ties of proximity and neighbourhood.

⁷⁴¹ Bailey, *English Manor*, 167-78.

The Manor Court

The right to hold the manor court was a key part of lordly jurisdiction, and could be seen as a tool to oppress and control the local population. Nevertheless, meetings were likely to foster horizontal links, rather than just reinforcing peasant subjugation, and often the rolls contain entries of little or no seigneurial interest.⁷⁴² The busiest manor courts tended to be held every three weeks, but others were held less frequently. Some would have been obliged to attend as a term of their tenure, but others would have chosen to attend out of interest in communal issues or to pursue their own interests in a local, convenient court.⁷⁴³

Manorial court rolls do not contain a complete picture of the local community and its concerns. Nonetheless, court rolls have been utilised by numerous scholars to illuminate aspects of peasant life. Razi's and Smith's edited volume *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* contains a wide range of studies, from attempts to understand how people would have conceptualised law,⁷⁴⁴ to land transfers,⁷⁴⁵ and markets and urbanisation,⁷⁴⁶ amongst others. Earlier studies include Pimsler's work on personal pledging at Elton, which showed that many of the pledges were 'professionals' or manorial officials. However, his conclusion that 'pledging often seems to have had the character of a business, rather than a friendship relationship, [so] it does not appear to be a very

⁷⁴² P. Hyams, 'What did Edwardian Villagers Understand by Law' in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, 72-3; Dyer, 'Medieval Village Community', 412-7; R. Evans, 'Whose was the manorial court?' in *Lordship and Learning: Studies in Memory of Trevor Aston*, ed. R. Evans (Woodbridge, 2000), 155-68.

⁷⁴³ Bailey, *English Manor*, 167-78; Dyer, *Making*, 141-2. See also: Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 50-92.

⁷⁴⁴ Hyams, 'Edwardian Villagers', 69-102; L. Bonfield, 'What did English Villagers Mean by 'Customary Law'?', 103-116.

⁷⁴⁵ E. Clark, 'Charitable Bequests, Deathbed Land Sales, and the Manor Court in Later Medieval England', 143-161; Harvey, 'The Peasant Land Market', 392-407.

⁷⁴⁶ R.M. Smith, 'A Periodic Market and its Impact upon a Manorial Community: Botesdale, Suffolk and the Manor of Redgrave, 1280-1300', 450-81; R.H. Hilton, 'Low-level Urbanization: The Seigneurial Borough of Thornbury in the Middle Ages', 482-517.

adequate tool for deciphering community ties⁷⁴⁷ seems unnecessarily pessimistic: 'community ties' need not be limited to social relationships, and practical need was often the foundation of a community. DeWindt's study of the Ramsay manors found other trends in pledging behaviour, such as a tendency for those involved in the food trade to act as pledges for each other.⁷⁴⁸

Schofield used the rolls for Hinderclay, Blackburn, to emphasise the importance of gossip and local knowledge as well as legal procedure in the manor courts.⁷⁴⁹ Schofield has also used these rolls to analyse responses to harvest failure, and how periods of dearth affected systems of debt, amongst other subjects.⁷⁵⁰ Birrell's study of Alrewas in Staffordshire used manor court records to highlight peasant resistance to lords as a prequel to 1381.⁷⁵¹ Rolls have been used for the study of families, focusing on family status and the prevalence of family interaction, amongst other themes.⁷⁵² They have also, somewhat controversially, been used to estimate population.⁷⁵³

Such a variety of studies reflects the variety of business at a manorial court. Even the fines that relate to seigneurial control can tell us something about the attitudes of the local community, as they were serving as manorial officials and providing evidence. Bailey has shown that childwite, the fine paid for bearing an illegitimate child, was one

⁷⁴⁷ M. Pimsler, 'Personal Pledging in a Medieval English Village', PhD Thesis, King's College London (1974), 148. See also: Pimsler, 'Solidarity', 1-11; Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 109-22.

⁷⁴⁸ A.R. DeWindt, 'Redefining the Peasant Community in Medieval England: The Regional Perspective', *JBS*, 26, 2 (1987), 181.

⁷⁴⁹ Schofield, 'Peasants and the Manor Court', 3-42.

⁷⁵⁰ Schofield, 'Dearth, Debt', 1-17.

⁷⁵¹ J. Birrell, 'Confrontation and Negotiation in a Medieval Village: Alrewas before the Black Death' in *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer*, eds. R. Goddard, J. Langdon, M. Müller (Turnhout, 2010), 197-212.

⁷⁵² Hanawalt, *Ties that Bound*; Hanawalt-Westman, 'Family and Crime', 1-18; Razi, *Life, Marriage*; Smith, 'Families and their land'.

⁷⁵³ For example, Razi, *Life, Marriage*, 45, 92-3; Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 141-56; L.R. Poos, Z. Razi, R.M. Smith, 'The Population History of Medieval English Villages: A Debate on the Use of Manor Court Records' in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, 298-368.

aspect of villeinage that was regularly enforced in Suffolk,⁷⁵⁴ and childwite fines do appear in the rolls for Rickinghall, Hinderclay and Walsham-le-Willows in Blackbourn hundred.⁷⁵⁵ It has been suggested that childwite and leyrwite, the fine for fornication, were forms of social control, enforced not just by the lord but also by the community. Where population pressure was high, these fines were attempts to limit illegitimate births. It has been shown that they were particularly focused on poor and marginal females, a sector of society that lords and tenants alike may have had an interest in controlling.⁷⁵⁶ Schofield found that in Hinderclay the number of childwite fines rose during a period of famine in the 1290s. Either a period of dearth left people too poor to marry, or bearing an illegitimate child was more likely to be punished during years of want.⁷⁵⁷ Fox has stated that members of the 'community' had an important role and a clear interest in helping their lords maintain control over the landless members of society more generally.⁷⁵⁸ This would mean that these fines were not just lordly policy, but actively supported by the community to control unsavoury elements.⁷⁵⁹

However, not all childwite fines were paid by the poorest members of society. An interesting case appears in the Walsham court rolls in 1353:

Cristiana Springold gave birth outside wedlock, childwite 32*d*. Pledge John Spileman and the hayward; ordered to attach her to serve the lord as a winnow, pledge the same John. John Spileman ordered not to cohabit with Cristiana in future, under penalty of 40*s*. Later Cristiana came and paid 10*s* fine for leave to marry John, pledge Isabella Spileman.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 441.

⁷⁵⁵ For example: *Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-99*, 43, 60, 83, 85; BL Add MS 40063, f3v (Ymagina, daughter of Thomas Waryn, in Rickinghall). For the decline of servile incidents in Walsham, see: Bailey, *Serfdom*, 105-15.

⁷⁵⁶ J. Bennett, 'Writing Fornication: Medieval *Leyrwite* and its Historians', *TRHS*, 13 (2003), 131-62. See also: Dyer, *Making*, 157; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 54; Bailey, 'Villeinage', 440;

⁷⁵⁷ Schofield, 'Dearth, Debt', 9.

⁷⁵⁸ H.S.A Fox, 'Exploitation of the Landless by Lords and Tenants in Early Medieval England', in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, eds. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford, 1996), 522. See also Dyer, *Lords*, 358-60.

⁷⁵⁹ For community attitudes to the poor see: Dyer, 'Poverty', 51-67.

⁷⁶⁰ *Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-99*, 40.

It does not seem to be poverty preventing this couple from marrying, as Cristiana was able to pay 10s to marry John, and the rolls record that John held eighteen acres at his death in 1361.⁷⁶¹ But this entry states that they were living together, in breach of pressure to marry. It is not clear if this pressure was coming from the community or just from the lord, but the fact that it was reported implies that at least some members of the community were uncomfortable with the arrangement. John was no stranger to breaking the rules. He had previously acted as reeve for Walsham, and was amerced for failing to raise the fold during his term of office. He was also accused of using a cart that belonged to the Lady of the manor for his own use as well as making use of the services of a carpenter in her pay; he stole straps for a cart harness; his care of the Lady's wood was defective, so it was damaged; and to top off this list of malpractice he insulted the Lady's son, Henry.⁷⁶² The misdemeanours listed in the rolls specifically injured the Lady of the manor, but it does not follow that the rest of the community would have looked upon them favourably. His actions could have impacted upon others, and his determination to take advantage of his office may have extended to his dealings with other tenants as well as the lord. The recording of John's misdemeanours and Cristiana's childwite fine could express the community's frustration with a neighbour who refused to conform to society's rules, as much as a lordly attempt to bring John into line.⁷⁶³

Some business discussed at the manor court does seem to benefit the lord exclusively, such as payments to allow an heir to inherit. But some business was not related to the lord's interests at all. For example, in 1303 William Goche appeared in three cases in one session of the Walsham manor court, all for cases of debt and breaching agreements

⁷⁶¹ *Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-99*, 60.

⁷⁶² *Walsham-le-Willows, 1350-99*, 29.

⁷⁶³ For the importance of conformity see Ault, 'Vill in Medieval England', 196; E. Clark, 'Social Welfare and Mutual Aid in the Medieval Countryside', *JBS*, 33, 4 (1994), 386.

he had made with other tenants.⁷⁶⁴ The lord had an obligation to provide a forum for his tenants to arbitrate their disputes, and it was in his interest for that forum to be under his control, particularly as there were opportunities for profit. Similarly it would have been in the interests of the tenants to cooperate with the lord, because the manor court provided them with a local setting for justice.⁷⁶⁵ However, as hinted at above, opportunities for 'justice' were not entirely equal. The more substantial tenants tended to dominate official positions in manorial courts.⁷⁶⁶ The jurors for the manor courts were also drawn from this same group of people,⁷⁶⁷ and they were also the most frequent pledgers.⁷⁶⁸ So rather than serving the whole manor, manorial courts could be seen as benefitting just a small oligarchy of tenants, in league with the lord to maintain the status quo. But as Reynolds has pointed out, modern ideas of democracy can skew perceptions of medieval communities. Manorial communities did not have to be communities of equals.⁷⁶⁹ The manorial elites did not always get away with wrongdoing, as the example of John Spileman above indicates. Similarly, the reeve of Rickinghall was amerced in 1294 for wrongly distraining two of the lord's villeins, showing that manorial officials were not above the law.⁷⁷⁰ When the manor court was insufficient, or the official was protected by his lord, sometimes there was recourse to the king. During the 1275 Hundred Rolls inquiry, people complained that Adam de Dalham, bailiff of Richard Hovel had extorted money and wrongly distrained goods, keeping them at his lord's manor in Market Weston, Blackbourn.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁴ *Walsham-le-Willows*, 1303-50, 28-9. Numerous similar examples from other rolls could be cited. For example, in Rickinghall in 1260 Wyot Golding was in mercy for unjustly keeping 4s from Adam Cole: BL Add Roll 63380.

⁷⁶⁵ Bailey, *English Manor*, 167-72.

⁷⁶⁶ Hilton, *English Peasantry*, 54; Dyer, *Lords*, 64-5.

⁷⁶⁷ R. Lennard, 'Early Manorial Juries', *EHR*, 77 (1962), 517; Dyer, *Lords*, 368-9.

⁷⁶⁸ Pimsler, 'Personal Pledging', 58-61; Pimsler, 'Solidarity', 6-10; Britton, *Community*, 45-6, 94-5, 104, 113-4.

⁷⁶⁹ Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 247-51, 268, 332; Hilton, *Bond Men*, 32-3.

⁷⁷⁰ BL Add MS 40063, f3. Harvey suggests that the Cuxham reeves generally got away with their misdemeanours, however: Harvey, *Cuxham*, 69-70.

⁷⁷¹ *RH*, ii, 158.

Even outside the official sessions, these meetings gave people the opportunity to discuss their grievances. People could forge new contacts and renew old ones: socialise, gossip, and catch up with friends. This sometimes spilled over into the court sessions themselves: on several occasions in the Walsham rolls men were in mercy for chatting during the court.⁷⁷² These gatherings would also provide opportunities to make business deals and to trade in an informal setting. We only have a record of the official business of these manor court sessions, but much that went on was unrecorded by the clerks.

There would have been variations across different manors, depending on their size and their lords. Those with small, local lords may have had *less* freedom in the manor court, as these lords would have been more likely to personally oversee the court and take an active interest in its business. However, it seems unlikely that some of the smallest ‘manors’ had regular courts at all. Perhaps the business of the very smallest manors was subsumed within another local manor, or another of their lord’s manors elsewhere.

Other courts and meetings

The fragmentation of manors could have fundamentally undermined vill communities, by making the manor court less effective as a forum to bring together the entire community. Alternatively though, manorial division could have the opposite effect: as no individual manor court had jurisdiction over vill business, it gave the local community the impetus to gather together independently.⁷⁷³ It has been argued that the vill must have had regular assemblies in order to fulfil the numerous responsibilities placed upon it and to maintain communal agriculture.⁷⁷⁴ Kosminsky was sceptical about

⁷⁷² *Walsham-le-Willows, 1303-50*, 145, 235; *1350-99*, 64, 90, 91.

⁷⁷³ Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 130; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 103-4; Dyer, ‘Medieval Village Community’, 412.

⁷⁷⁴ Razi, ‘Family, Land’, 14; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 129-31; C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), 435.

the existence of such assemblies,⁷⁷⁵ but even if such meetings were relatively informal, it seems certain that some agreement between peasants on different manors co-existing in the same settlement would have been desirable if not imperative.⁷⁷⁶ This would have been particularly necessary for agricultural cooperation, as the earliest vill by-laws indicate. These agricultural by-laws rarely survive, unless they were mentioned in manorial court rolls. Even so, Ault has argued that they were not manorial in origin, and they represent the needs of the community, rather than being arbitrarily laid down by the lords.⁷⁷⁷

The by-laws focused on issues like upkeep of boundaries and shared resources and the grazing of livestock, and dictated punishments for those who broke the rules. None survive for the three case studies, but agricultural rules in some form must have existed. There are numerous examples in the Walsham and Rickingham court rolls of people being fined for damaging the lord's crops or letting their livestock wander loose;⁷⁷⁸ fines were also recorded for this in the earl of Cornwall's accounts for Langtree hundred;⁷⁷⁹ it seems highly unlikely that there was no concern about the same things happening to tenants' lands.

3.2.5 Units of representation, assessment and obligation

Though the information was originally collected hundred by hundred,⁷⁸⁰ Domesday Book is arranged by tenant-in-chief so the focus of the returns in their final form is on the manor. By the thirteenth century, surveys like the Hundred Rolls and taxation

⁷⁷⁵ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 274.

⁷⁷⁶ Dyer, 'Poverty', 55.

⁷⁷⁷ W.O. Ault, 'Open Field Husbandry and the Village Community: A Study of Agrarian By-Laws in Medieval England', *American Philosophical Society*, 55, 7 (1965)', 54; W.O. Ault, 'Village By-laws by Common Consent', *Speculum*, 29 (1954), 383-4, 394. See also Dyer, *Making*, 184-5.

⁷⁷⁸ For example: *Walsham-le-Willows*, 1303-50, 28-31; BL Add Roll 63401, 2d (Rickingham, 1285-6).

⁷⁷⁹ *Ministers Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall*, 126.

⁷⁸⁰ Galbraith, 'Making of Domesday', 161-77.

records use the vill as their unit of assessment.⁷⁸¹ Within each vill in the Hundred Rolls the information is arranged by manor, but the vill is the overriding unit of organisation: when a manor crossed vill boundaries, for example John Burton's manor in Swaffham Prior and Bulbeck, Staine, the two parts were described separately within the rolls.⁷⁸² This shows that the vill was a unit that the king, his administrators and the jurors of each hundred could conceptualise. Much of the information must have come from local knowledge, implying that people in these localities also had a clear sense of these units. Though the use of the vill as a unit of assessment is a 'top down' approach, it does not follow that they were without coherence in reality, and treating the vill as a unit of obligation must have added structure to a community.⁷⁸³

Maintaining Order

The inhabitants of medieval England had an important role in maintaining order. There was no standing police force, so enforcement of the law fell on those who lived in the vicinity of where a crime was committed.⁷⁸⁴ When someone witnessed or discovered a crime, they were obliged to raise the hue and cry, and the people of the vill were required to pursue the criminal.⁷⁸⁵

As with many aspects of medieval law, mention of the hue and cry appears most frequently in the legal records when the obligation was not fulfilled. This obligation must have been a drain on time and resources, and would have been followed more or

⁷⁸¹ There were some exceptions, including the thirteenth in 1207, which was ordered to be assessed on the parish: *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History*, ed. W. Stubbs (Oxford, 1870), 277-9.

⁷⁸² *RH*, ii, 487a, 494b-495a.

⁷⁸³ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, 104-5.

⁷⁸⁴ C. Dyer, 'Power and Conflict in the Medieval English Village' in *Medieval Villages, A review of Current Work*, ed. D. Hooke (Oxford, 1985), 27-8.

⁷⁸⁵ Ault, 'Vill in Medieval England', 189; *OHLE*, 395-6.

less enthusiastically depending on the crime and the criminal. Following an argument between Thomas Newman, Roger Develyn and William Coleman in the fields of Goring, Langtree, Thomas killed Roger, but William failed to raise the hue and cry.⁷⁸⁶ Perhaps he was concerned his own involvement may have been questioned, or perhaps he felt Thomas's actions were justified. William was not the only person who failed to act, as the vill of Goring received Thomas despite his crime; in this case members of the community were prepared to help Thomas rather than immediately fulfilling their roles in the justice system.

Sometimes people must have failed to raise the hue and cry because of fears for their personal safety. A late fourteenth-century case from Bunsty hundred shows that doing so could have repercussions:

William Godeknave attacked James Hanslope at Gayhurst by force of arms, namely a sword, and beat, wounded and ill-treated him, so that his life was despaired of. And immediately afterwards he was taken by John Godfrey and John Hore, the constables of Gayhurst, and put in the stocks until he should find security for his good conduct...Afterwards there came a certain John Haversham of Stantonbury and others in a band with him, in warlike fashion with various arms...and there broke open the stocks and took William... And when Amisia, wife of the said John Godfrey, one of the constables, raised the hue and cry against them, they attacked her there and beat, wounded, and ill-treated her against the peace.⁷⁸⁷

Faced with the same odds as Amisia, many others must have made the decision to avoid bringing trouble down on themselves. Earlier records generally fail to give such detailed information, but it is possible that some of the occasions where the hue was not raised can be explained by the danger inherent in doing so. The 1240 Suffolk eyre roll states that the vills of Knettishall and Ashfield (both Blackbourn) failed to raise the hue and cry when the bodies of Robert son of Letelina and William Gosetung were found in their respective vills.⁷⁸⁸ People may have been shirking their responsibilities, but they

⁷⁸⁶ TNA JUST1/703, m6.

⁷⁸⁷ *Inquests and Indictments*, 393.

⁷⁸⁸ TNA JUST1/818, m54.

could also have been in fear for their lives. That people did often act despite potential danger shows that this obligation on the vill was widely accepted. Without the preparedness of the community to act, the entire system would have broken down.

Once the hue and cry had been raised, it was the responsibility of the vill to capture the criminal and detain them. Frequently the rolls record that the accused had escaped from the custody of a vill, suggesting a lack of resources, and perhaps even lack of desire to ensure that a criminal came to justice.⁷⁸⁹ The vill of Crowmarsh Gifford, Langtree, was amerced in 1241 for not even pursuing Henry son of Geoffrey of Crowmarsh after he stabbed and killed Ralph le Poer.⁷⁹⁰ In 1268 North Stoke, Langtree, was amerced because Thomas Clerk, accused of thieving and burglary, had escaped from prison.⁷⁹¹ The same rolls state that Juliana had been captured thieving on market day at Crowmarsh Gifford and been passed to the vill of Newnham Murren for custody, but had escaped.⁷⁹² In 1272, the Bunsty jurors presented that Simon Tiler of Twyford had been captured and imprisoned by the vill of Weston [Underwood] on suspicion of theft. He escaped and fled to the church of Ravenstone; the vill of Weston Underwood was amerced for letting him escape, and the vill of Ravenstone was amerced for not recapturing him.⁷⁹³ Robert Gosbitere was captured and hanged after being taken for burglary in the vill of Ipsden, Langtree; this only occurred however, after he had been captured once and then escaped from the same vill.⁷⁹⁴ These criminals were not literally being guarded by the entire vill, but by representatives.⁷⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the obligation

⁷⁸⁹ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 102-4.

⁷⁹⁰ *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, 903.

⁷⁹¹ TNA JUST1/703, m6.

⁷⁹² TNA JUST1/703, m6.

⁷⁹³ TNA JUST1/60, m26.

⁷⁹⁴ TNA JUST1/705, m5d.

⁷⁹⁵ R.F. Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), 40-2.

fell on the vill as a whole, meaning that amercements for failure were general rather than on the specific individuals on duty.

As well as catching and detaining prisoners, representatives of the four neighbouring vills had to attend several different courts, including the hundred, shire and eyre, to report after a crime had been committed. The *Leges Henrici Primi* record that the reeve, the priest and three or four other men of the vill had to attend the hundred and shire courts.⁷⁹⁶ The Assize of Clarendon of 1166 states that ‘four of the more lawful men of the vill’ had to attend the hundred court.⁷⁹⁷ It is not entirely clear how these men were chosen, but perhaps the reeve (itself an elected position) or other officials were involved. It was in the interests of all villagers that trustworthy representatives were chosen, as failure to attend or report correctly would lead to an amercement on the whole vill.⁷⁹⁸

When the representatives of the four neighbouring vills did attend the court, they had a key role in providing evidence and reaching judgments. At the 1247 Oxfordshire eyre for Langtree, Emma de Chele appealed Robert Nel that seven years previously he had struck her and treated her violently and shamefully, raped her, and then robbed her.⁷⁹⁹ Robert denied all, and the jurors and four neighbouring vills said that he had not raped her, nor had he stolen from her; however, he had struck her. He was placed in custody for that transgression, but so was Emma for a false claim regarding the rape and

⁷⁹⁶ *LHP*, 100. See also: N. Karn, ‘Rethinking the *Leges Henrici Primi*’ in *English Law before Magna Carta*, eds. A. Rabin, S. Jurasinski and O. Lisi (Leiden, 2010), 199-220,

⁷⁹⁷ *EHD*, ii, 405.

⁷⁹⁸ For example: Mapledurham and Whitchurch were amerced in 1285 for not attending the coroner’s court: TNA JUST1/705, m4d. Little Livermere and Coney Weston were amerced in 1287 because their representatives did not attend the eyre regarding a homicide: TNA JUST1/827, m40.

⁷⁹⁹ For procedures and prosecutions in rape cases see: Wilkinson, *Women*, 149-153.

robbery.⁸⁰⁰ It is significant that the alleged attack had taken place so many years before. Emma's attacker had been identified, and both Emma and Robert must have been known to the jurors and the four neighbouring vills for them to be able to confidently distinguish between the parts of Emma's claim that *did* occur and those which did not. The rolls do not identify where Emma and Robert lived, but it is possible that both lived in the locality and there were other Nels in the Langtree Hundred Rolls.⁸⁰¹ If so, Emma and Robert would have been living amongst the people who were to decide their fates at the eyre. The reputations of those involved, and social and economic relations outside the courts, cannot have failed to impact upon the final verdict.⁸⁰²

Sometimes the representatives of the four vills seem to have been involved in collusion. The vills had to provide a valuation of deodands in cases of death by misadventure, and in 1247, 1261 and 1285 in Langtree hundred the eyre rolls record that four relatively valuable deodands were incorrectly valued.⁸⁰³ These may represent genuine mistakes, but the possibility of collusion should not be dismissed. If these were attempts to 'work the system', then they were coordinated attempts to do so, as the representatives of four different vills were all implicated.

Communities could play a role in determining the cases that came to court and whether or not the accused was found guilty. The punishment for many crimes was death or outlawry, so it would be unsurprising for people to close ranks and protect those who were accused.⁸⁰⁴ The crucial role that local people had in policing and reporting crime

⁸⁰⁰ TNA JUST1/700, m2.

⁸⁰¹ Ralph and Walter Nel: *RH*, ii, 775b, 780a.

⁸⁰² T.A. Green, *Verdict According to Conscience: Perspectives on the English Criminal Trial Jury, 1200-1800* (Chicago, 1985), 17-8.

⁸⁰³ TNA JUST1/700 m2; JUST1/705, m5; Jobson, 'Oxfordshire Eyre of 1261', 763, 764. See Hunnisett, *Coroner*, 32-4.

⁸⁰⁴ Green, *Verdict*, 26-9, 63-4.

means that opportunities for inhabitants to ‘employ their collective memory selectively’ would have been rife, but collusion would have needed to involve a wide cross-section of the community if it was to be successful.⁸⁰⁵ Such collusion could help to explain the number of crimes supposedly committed by ‘unknown malefactors’; it is possible that these crimes were in fact committed by known individuals whom the community was trying to protect, or that ‘justice’ had already been administered within the community. Evidence of collusion is only provided when people were caught, so it is impossible to know how frequently groups successfully engaged in similar practices.

Financial obligations on the vill

Failure to fulfil obligations led to amercements.⁸⁰⁶ The frequency with which these amercements were charged may suggest that the obligations placed on the vill were poorly fulfilled and thus cannot be seen as proof of the coherence of the vill community. In reality, the extent of the obligations meant that it would have been difficult to avoid amercements entirely. It is also possible that vills approached the obligations tactically, making the judgement that a shared amercement was easier than the time consuming obligations themselves.⁸⁰⁷

The fact that vills were amerced must imply that they were seen as coherent administrative units. If the vill and the manor coincided, then the manor court would have been the ideal place to allocate payments. Where this was not the case, the process must have been more complex. Clearly, the people enforcing these fines believed that mechanisms were in place for them to be raised. When a vill was fined at a general eyre,

⁸⁰⁵ Dyer, *Making*, 179; Dyer, ‘Medieval Village Community’, 416-7; Jobson, ‘Oxfordshire Eyre of 1261’, 79-80.

⁸⁰⁶ A.L. Poole, *Obligations of Society in the XII and XIII Centuries* (Oxford, 1946), 81-91.

⁸⁰⁷ Hunnisett, *Coroner*, 27-9, 40-2.

it is possible that the amercements were allocated relative to the amount of land an individual held, or even that they were weighted by perceived fault. If an individual was directly involved in the escape of a criminal or even in the crime itself, they may have been expected to shoulder the greatest share of an amercement. Either way, there must have been someone who was responsible for collecting the money. It seems highly doubtful that the sheriff's staff would have been prepared to collect fines in small amounts from individuals, but would have expected the full amount paid in one go.⁸⁰⁸ Maitland contended that a similar process existed for collection of the geld in the eleventh century, suggesting that the lord would be responsible for gathering the small amounts that were owed by his peasants, rather than the geld collectors going from cottage to cottage.⁸⁰⁹

More regular payments would have also required organisation. The late twelfth-century *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson lists payments made by the vill of Blackbourn double-hundred. In some cases totals are given with no indication of who owed what. For example, the vill of Barnham owed 2s sheriff's aid annually; South Norton owed 6s sheriff's aid.⁸¹⁰ Where a breakdown is provided, the logic behind it is not always clear, as two people with the same amount of land could owe different amounts towards each obligation.⁸¹¹ This implies that rates owed were negotiated or set at a much earlier date, rather than being directly assessed against the amount of land held.

Sometimes officials used their position to extort extra money from communities. Fulk of Rycote demanded 2s from the vill of Gatehampton before he would fulfil his

⁸⁰⁸ C.A.F. Meekings, *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre, 1249* (Devizes, 1961), 107-115.

⁸⁰⁹ *DBB*, 55, 122-5.

⁸¹⁰ *Kalendar*, 40, 41.

⁸¹¹ For example, compare Ohin and Aluric son of Hahen in Hepworth: *Kalendar*, 45.

responsibilities as coroner in the 1280s; even after receiving payment he sent Henry his clerk instead, so the vill was still amerced for burying the body when it had not been viewed by the coroner himself.⁸¹² It was not only the royal officials who had opportunity for extortion and corruption, but also those acting on behalf of lords. At the 1261 eyre, Richard de Turri, bailiff of Wallingford, was accused of taking 5s from Mongewell at the view of frankpledge, when previously it had only given 3s. Peter de Esserugge, acting in the same capacity, also took 5s from Mongewell. Even more significantly, he took 20s from Newnham Murren when that vill had only been accustomed to give 2s.⁸¹³

It is possible that payments fell more heavily on the poorer members of society, who did not have the money or influence to avoid them.⁸¹⁴ However, fines and unexpected charges cannot have fallen on the poorest people alone, as they would not have had the reserves to pay them.⁸¹⁵ Dyer has argued that payments impacted the entire vill, even if funds were just extracted from the middling and wealthy villagers, because it left them with less money to spend on the goods and services provided by their poorer neighbours, and less to lend to them in times of hardship.⁸¹⁶ Just as disagreements with lords could unite the inhabitants of a manor, mistreatment of a vill by an official could have united members of the vill whether they were rich or poor.

⁸¹² TNA JUST1/705, m5d. For corruption of coroners see: Hunnisett, *Coroner*, 118-26.

⁸¹³ Jobson, 'Oxfordshire Eyre of 1261', 770.

⁸¹⁴ For example, it has been shown that taxation fell more heavily on the lower members of the commune in Oxford: C.I. Hammer, 'Complaints of the lesser commune, oligarchic rule and baronial reform in thirteenth-century Oxford', *Historical Research*, 85, 229 (2012), 353-71. See also: Schofield, *Peasant*, 172-5.

⁸¹⁵ Dyer, 'Poverty', 49; Dyer, *Making*, 231-2.

⁸¹⁶ Dyer, *Standards*, 139, 314; Dyer, *Making*, 257-9; Schofield, 'Dearth, Debt', 16-7.

The examples given are all from the thirteenth century, but relying on the vill as a policing unit and a unit for exaction extended back before the Conquest.⁸¹⁷ Undoubtedly though, the number of obligations placed on the vill increased across this period as government became more intrusive and more demanding. This could suggest that, in turn, the vill as a unit was likely to have become more coherent and more self-aware across this period as well; but it also suggests that even at an early period the vill was deemed coherent enough to be used to make demands of the populace.

3.2.6 The Parish Church

Religion was an integral part of medieval life, and village churches were places where the community came together on a regular basis.⁸¹⁸ Some of the churches in these case studies were in existence before the Norman Conquest, and most of the others have features that suggest they were built in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries at the latest.⁸¹⁹ When parish boundaries coincided with those of vill or manor, they could reinforce a sense of community and association.⁸²⁰ It was shown above that lords actively sought to establish their own local churches, suggesting that they recognised their importance in reinforcing manorial cohesion and seigneurial control.⁸²¹

The long-term dispute over ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Swaffham Prior led to two churches being built in the same churchyard in the twelfth century.⁸²² One can imagine how impressive, and how confusing, the existence of both churches may have been for the inhabitants. The existence of two churches, and the fact that their primacy was

⁸¹⁷ Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon State*, xvi, xxiv, xxvi, 14-5, 27; J.C. Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State' in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J.C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), 206-7.

⁸¹⁸ Dyer, 'Medieval Village Community', 419; Schofield, *Peasant*, 186-9.

⁸¹⁹ Above, 96-7.

⁸²⁰ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 106-10.

⁸²¹ Above, 97-9.

⁸²² Above, 97-8.

disputed, could have torn huge divisions in the community of this vill, particularly when coupled with the extent of manorial division. However, even if people attended a different church to their neighbour, they could still have congregated before and afterwards in the same churchyard.⁸²³ Moreover, there was no clear boundary between the parishes served by St Cyriac's and St Mary's, and it seems likely that the parishioners' lands and dwellings were interspersed throughout the vill.⁸²⁴

Some lords granted the tithes of their church to other religious houses.⁸²⁵ This could generate resentment amongst the local population, whose tithes were not benefitting the local church and parish. Miles Crispin, lord of much of Langtree in Domesday, granted the tithes of Newnham, North Stoke, Goring, Gatehampton, Whitchurch and Mapledurham, amongst others in his possession elsewhere, to the abbey of Bec.⁸²⁶ Patronage of Bec was continued by Miles's daughter and tenants of the honour of Wallingford.⁸²⁷ Records of the abbey for their English possessions show that in 1288-9 they collected £3 6s 6d from these Langtree tithes.⁸²⁸ By the thirteenth century, even the lords in Langtree lacked close ties to Bec, so the diversion of these funds to a foreign religious house could have been particularly frustrating.

However, even when tithes were going to the local church, they could still cause resentment. In 1294, Nicholas the rector of Checkendon church (one of the few in Langtree whose tithes had not been diverted to Bec), complained that he had been prevented from collecting his tithes. The dean of Henley was ordered to excommunicate

⁸²³ Whyte, *Inhabiting*, 79.

⁸²⁴ *Historical Monuments*, xxv.

⁸²⁵ J.R.H. Moorman, *Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1946), 38-44.

⁸²⁶ *EEA*, i, 18.

⁸²⁷ *Select Documents of the English lands of the Abbey of Bec*, ed. M. Chibnall (London, 1951), 13-4; 26-7.

⁸²⁸ *Select Documents of Bec*, 127.

all those who had prevented the rector from collecting them. John Marmion, lord of the manor, was to be warned separately that if he did not stop interfering in their collection, the bishop would deal with him personally.⁸²⁹ This suggests that this was a wide-reaching issue that applied to the lord as well as others in the community. Lord-peasant relationships were not always characterised by conflict, and sometimes their interests were aligned.

The parochial clergy should have been upstanding, moral characters, who encouraged respect and trust from their parishioners. In addition to ministration of the sacraments, hearing confession and granting of absolution, they were also supposed to act as peace-makers and offer hospitality and advice.⁸³⁰ The importance of their position in local society is underlined by the fact that in the earlier part of this period priests were expected to act as representatives for their vill in courts; their role in the community was not exclusively religious.⁸³¹ However, it is unsurprising that so many were deemed unsuitable or uneducated, when serving in a parish church could mean living in relative poverty. Owen has argued that the parochial clergy experienced difficulties in their relations with their parishioners, because of the low standard of their education and lack of resources; as they engaged in ‘undignified squabbles about offerings or candles’, they can hardly be seen as figures to inspire respect.⁸³² This issue was exacerbated by a tendency to treat substantial rectories as patronage for men performing other duties, encouraging plural office-holding and non-resident rectors, and leaving little income for the vicars actually personally serving.⁸³³ In 1262 at the death of Henry of Wingham,

⁸²⁹ Sutton, v, 24-5. See also: G. Constable, ‘Resistance to Tithes in the Middle Ages’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 13 (1962), 172-85.

⁸³⁰ R.N. Swanson, ‘Problems of the Priesthood in Pre-Reformation England’, *EHR*, 105, 417 (1990), 846-7.

⁸³¹ Swanson, ‘Problems of Priesthood’, 846-7.

⁸³² D.M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1971), 142.

⁸³³ Moorman, *Church Life*, 26-34; Schofield, *Peasant*, 192-4.

bishop of London (1260-2), he still held the benefices of Elton, Huntingdonshire, as well as Hanslope in Bunsty hundred.⁸³⁴ In 1243, a certain Alan was presented to the church of Gayhurst in Bunsty hundred by Aymer de Noers, saving four marks of income from the church to be paid to Ralph, Aymer's son.⁸³⁵

Despite legislation, unsuitable vicars and rectors continued to be chosen by patrons.⁸³⁶ Warin fitzGerold, patron of Whitchurch church in Langtree, presented Sylvester to be vicar of that church in the early thirteenth century. Sylvester had to serve personally, but he also had to have a chaplain with him who could minister to the parishioners in a known language.⁸³⁷ In other words, Sylvester was supposed to personally minister to the people of Whitchurch, despite not speaking English. In 1222, Geoffrey de Rudeham was instituted parson of the church of Checkendon, but was ordered to attend the schools.⁸³⁸ In 1296, Simon, vicar of Crowmarsh, Langtree, was suspended from his office for repeated fornication with Joan Gernun.⁸³⁹

In March 1296, Peter le Blunt was presented to Hanslope church in Bunsty. On June 3 1299 Thurstan of Hanslope was presented to the same church, because Peter had still not been instituted over three years later. However, some agreement must have been struck, as just twenty days later Peter was re-presented, following the resignation of Thurstan. Shortly afterwards, he was given three years dispensation to attend the schools abroad.⁸⁴⁰ Numerous examples of men failing to be instituted for many years could be cited, suggesting that the men being chosen were not particularly eager to take

⁸³⁴ *Gravesend*, xxiv.

⁸³⁵ *Grosseteste*, 363, 365, 368.

⁸³⁶ *Gravesend*, xxvii, xxix.

⁸³⁷ *Hugh*, i, 33, 48.

⁸³⁸ *Hugh*, ii, 7.

⁸³⁹ *Sutton*, iii, 158. See also: Moorman, *Church Life*, 63-7.

⁸⁴⁰ *Sutton*, viii, 164, 170, 171, 222.

responsibility for the role. That is not to say that all rectors served for short periods or failed to be instituted. Robert de Esthall was rector of North Stoke for nearly four decades, from 1237 until his death in the 1270s.⁸⁴¹ Most rectors would not have served personally so frequent replacements may not have disrupted the parishioners. However, this does suggest that personal interest rather than the spiritual needs of the parishioners was forefront in the appointment and service of many churchmen.⁸⁴²

As the church was central to everyday life, it seems likely that indiscretions or failures of the local church would have affected the community. The fact that Simon, the vicar of Crowmarsh was accused of ‘repeated’ fornications with Joan Gernun implies that the couple were far from discrete. Joan was probably a member of the community herself, possibly related to Walter Gernun holding in Mongewell in the Hundred Rolls, and Philip Gernun who was taxed in the same vill in 1306.⁸⁴³ It is difficult to know how people would have reacted to this: Simon ended up resigning, but was this because of community concern, or his ecclesiastical superiors?⁸⁴⁴ Such ‘forbidden’ relationships would not always have been reported.

Disputes between rival patrons could also impact upon the communities. The church of Checkendon, Langtree, was vacant for six months in 1222 whilst Geoffrey Marmion pursued his claim against the prior of Coventry.⁸⁴⁵ People sometimes took advantage of these situations, and in 1293 the archdeacon of Oxford was ordered to excommunicate

⁸⁴¹ *Grosseteste*, 453; *Gravesend*, 226.

⁸⁴² Moorman, *Church Life*, 26-34.

⁸⁴³ *RH*, ii, 775a; E179/161/10, m6.

⁸⁴⁴ Dyer suggests that the laity actively reported shortcomings: Dyer, *Lords*, 363-5.

⁸⁴⁵ *Hugh*, ii, 7.

all those who had stolen goods belonging to the church of North Stoke when they were sequestrated on account of the vacancy in that church.⁸⁴⁶

Whyte has argued that consideration of medieval religious life should extend to the wider landscape, which was imbued with spiritual and ceremonial significance.⁸⁴⁷ The clearest example of this was the traditional perambulation of parish bounds during Rogation Week. A late sixteenth-century case from Swaffham Prior, Staine, records details of this ritual, as it had been carried out before the Reformation. It was recalled that two stone crosses were made and set on the boundaries of Burwell and Swaffham, and the parishioners of Swaffham went in procession to the crosses where they said ‘certaine epistells gospells or other prayers at ther ancient and uttermoste bounds’.⁸⁴⁸ It is unclear whether it occurred in the same form during the period of this study, but evidence suggests that such rituals were common.⁸⁴⁹ This was a ceremonial activity that would have brought the community together; it also shows that people would have had a clear idea of the geographical limits of their parish.

Church services and rites were a part of the lives of the parishioners at every point, and were shared with family and the rest of the community.⁸⁵⁰ But the local church was far more than just a building for these services, and religion was about more than ceremonies and sin. The church was generally the largest building in a vill, and the most prominent. The churchyard was a convenient, well-known, open air meeting-place.⁸⁵¹ It is not uncommon to hear of markets, games or feasts being held there, though members

⁸⁴⁶ Sutton, iv, 88.

⁸⁴⁷ Whyte, *Inhabiting*, 20, 28.

⁸⁴⁸ TNA E134/28Eliz/Hil5 quoted in: Whyte, *Inhabiting*, 36-7.

⁸⁴⁹ R. Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996), 277-87.

⁸⁵⁰ Owen, *Church and Society*, 102-4.

⁸⁵¹ Owen, *Church and Society*, 105.

of the ecclesiastical hierarchy attempted to prevent this. Even the churches themselves were sometimes used for meetings.⁸⁵² Attending church would have been an opportunity to socialise and gossip, as well as a spiritual necessity. The secular and religious significances of the local church each contributed to the importance of the church in medieval life as a whole. Communities were tied together by sharing a church and priest and attending the ceremonies that accompanied the births, marriages and deaths of their neighbours.⁸⁵³

That is not to say that the communities of vill or manors without a church or with more than one would have been fatally undermined by this. The church was one focus of community, just as were the manor court and the farming of the common fields of the vill. Communities were fluid: people's friendships and priorities could change. Some of these changes were entirely dependent upon local circumstances, but others reflected more general trends: increasing population; fragmentation of manors; the influx in church building in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries; an increase in the obligations placed upon the peasantry by the increasingly demanding state; the expansion of settlements and the assarting of woodland and fenland into arable. The manor, vill and parish boundaries did not limit the alignments that people formed, but proximity and administrative organisation often encouraged people to work, form friendships and marry within these groupings.

⁸⁵² D. Dymond, 'God's Disputed Acre', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50, 3 (1999), 464-97; Moorman, *Church Life*, 145-9; Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 158-9; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 108-10.

⁸⁵³ Dyer, *Making*, 157.

3.3 The Hundred

The importance of Cam's work on the hundred cannot be overestimated. Cam demonstrated the value of the hundred as an administrative, judicial, military and financial unit, and argued that the hundred court was an important focus for the community, bringing together a wide spectrum of society on a regular basis.⁸⁵⁴ The origins of the hundredal system have most frequently been placed in the early tenth century, and the hundreds with their courts are first explicitly recorded in the reign of Edmund (939-46).⁸⁵⁵ Davies and Campbell have argued that hundreds were artificial units and fiscal considerations were integral in their formation.⁸⁵⁶ In contrast, Williamson has shown that the boundaries of hundreds and wapentakes often had a relationship with the local topography, for example following watersheds between major valleys.⁸⁵⁷ Focusing on East Anglia, Cam recognised that some divisions seem to have pre-dated the existence of hundreds, and argued that hundreds developed in different ways under different conditions: whilst some represented existing units, others were more artificial.⁸⁵⁸

Rivers were important boundaries for each of the three case studies. Langtree hundred was bounded to the south and west by the Thames; Blackbourn hundred's northern boundary was delimited by the Little Ouse, and part of its western boundary by the River Lark; the Great Ouse formed much of the southern boundary of Bunsty hundred, and the River Tove the boundary between Bunsty and Northamptonshire. However, Newton Blossomville and Tyringham were divided from the rest of Bunsty hundred,

⁸⁵⁴ H.M. Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls: An Outline of Local Government in Medieval England* (London, 1930), particularly 17-9, 137-94. Also articles in Cam, *Liberties and Communities*.

⁸⁵⁵ J.C. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Letes: A survey with suggestions' in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2005), 153; H.M. Cam, 'Manerium cum hundredo: the Hundred and the Hundredal Manor' in *Liberties and Communities*, 84.

⁸⁵⁶ *Kalendar*, xxx; Campbell, 'Hundreds and Letes', 156.

⁸⁵⁷ Williamson, *Environment*, 56, 86-7.

⁸⁵⁸ Cam, 'Manerium cum hundredo', 89-90.

situated on the south bank of the River Ouse. Langtree hundred was divided into two unconnected geographical units, as the vills of South Stoke and Woodcote, situated between Goring and Checkendon with Little Stoke, formed part of Dorchester hundred.

Blackbourn fell partly within the East Anglian Brecklands, and partly within the High Suffolk region, meaning that the double-hundred contained dramatically different types of land. This had an impact on the economy, agricultural practices and settlement in different parts of the hundred;⁸⁵⁹ even within Blackbourn lords and peasants faced different challenges in different regions. This is true of the other hundreds, as none covered ground that was entirely uniform. Perhaps this difference encouraged interactions beyond the immediate locality because of the importance of sharing resources, but it also emphasises that residence in the same hundred did not always mean a shared experience or shared priorities.

3.3.1 Financial Exactions

As with the vill, the hundred was used as a unit for financial assessment and collection. Theoretically, each hundred contained 100 hides and would have paid geld at a uniform rate. When assessing for a tax on movables, commissioners worked within hundred boundaries and a hundred could be amerced for not fulfilling its functions. To the king and his government, the hundred was a coherent unit with the mechanisms to enforce payment.

⁸⁵⁹ Bailey, *Marginal*, 100, 118-20, 191-2, 198-9.

Domesday Assessments

Bunsty is named in Domesday Book. Langtree, like most Oxfordshire hundreds, is not specifically named within the text, but it is possible to reconstruct the boundaries using later evidence. Neither hundred contained exactly 100 hides in Domesday: Bunsty contained approximately ninety-eight hides and Langtree contained ninety.

Blackbourn/Bradmere was assessed at 133.5 carucates, but the Domesday carucates of East Anglia did not have the same association with the geld as the hides elsewhere. Certain entries state that a holding paid 'x in geld', meaning that for each pound of geld assessed upon the hundred as a whole, that holding would contribute so many pence.⁸⁶⁰ The unit of assessment was the vill, and in Blackbourn/Bradmere there was only one entry per vill containing a reference to geld.

Samson's *Kalendar* provides information as to how geld was allocated below hundredal level in East Anglia. In Norfolk and Suffolk, hundreds were broken down further into leets, which each bore an equal proportion of the hundred's geld assessment. When the Domesday geld assessments are grouped by the *Kalendar*'s leets, each leet within a hundred had an equal assessment, with only minor variations.⁸⁶¹ The size and assessment of leets across different hundreds varied (Blackbourn's fourteen leets were assessed at close to 34*d* each, whilst Thingoe's twelve leets owed 20*d* each), indicating that they were distributed at hundred level, rather than at shire level.

⁸⁶⁰ Bailey, 'Suffolk Domesday', 15-7.

⁸⁶¹ J.H. Round, *Feudal England: Historical Studies on the XIth and XIIth Centuries* (London, 1895) 99-101; Douglas, *East Anglia*, 56, 191-200; *FD*, clxii-clxiv; *Kalendar*, xv-xxv; C. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London, 1992), 83-4; Bailey, 'Suffolk Domesday', 15-7.

There is little agreement as to the origins of leets in East Anglia. Round claimed that the term ‘leet’ had Danish origins, drawing parallels with the Danish *lægd*, a division of the country in Denmark for military conscription.⁸⁶² Lees also postulated a Danish origin, indicating that this East Anglian system was a remnant of the time when the area was under Danish rule.⁸⁶³ Douglas identified them as early small hundreds, drawing parallels with the twelve carucate hundreds of Lincolnshire and elsewhere in the Danelaw.⁸⁶⁴ Hart stated that they were introduced at the same time as the hundreds, which he would place shortly after the conquest by Edward the Elder in 917.⁸⁶⁵ For Campbell, this date is too early and ‘the orderly detail of much of the East Anglian geld system indicates an origin which is at least fairly recent.’⁸⁶⁶ The division of the geld between leets is neat, perhaps indicating that the system was established specifically to attribute the geld liability. This would mean that they came into being in the late tenth century and no later than the early eleventh. It has been suggested however, that the leets were older than the geld.⁸⁶⁷ If they were earlier than the geld, then they were probably for the collection of some earlier tax or dues.

However, Davis stated that the leets in Blackbourn double-hundred must have been laid out after the compilation of Domesday Book. The Blackbourn villis were described under two different hundredal rubrications in Domesday: Blackbourn and Bradmere. Most of the leets described in the *Kalendar* would have crossed these hundredal boundaries, leading Davis to argue that they must have been re-organised after the two hundreds were merged, sometime in the late eleventh or twelfth century (Appendix

⁸⁶² Round, *Feudal England*, 101.

⁸⁶³ *VCH Suffolk*, i, 361.

⁸⁶⁴ Douglas, *East Anglia*, 57; *FD*, clxi-clxvi.

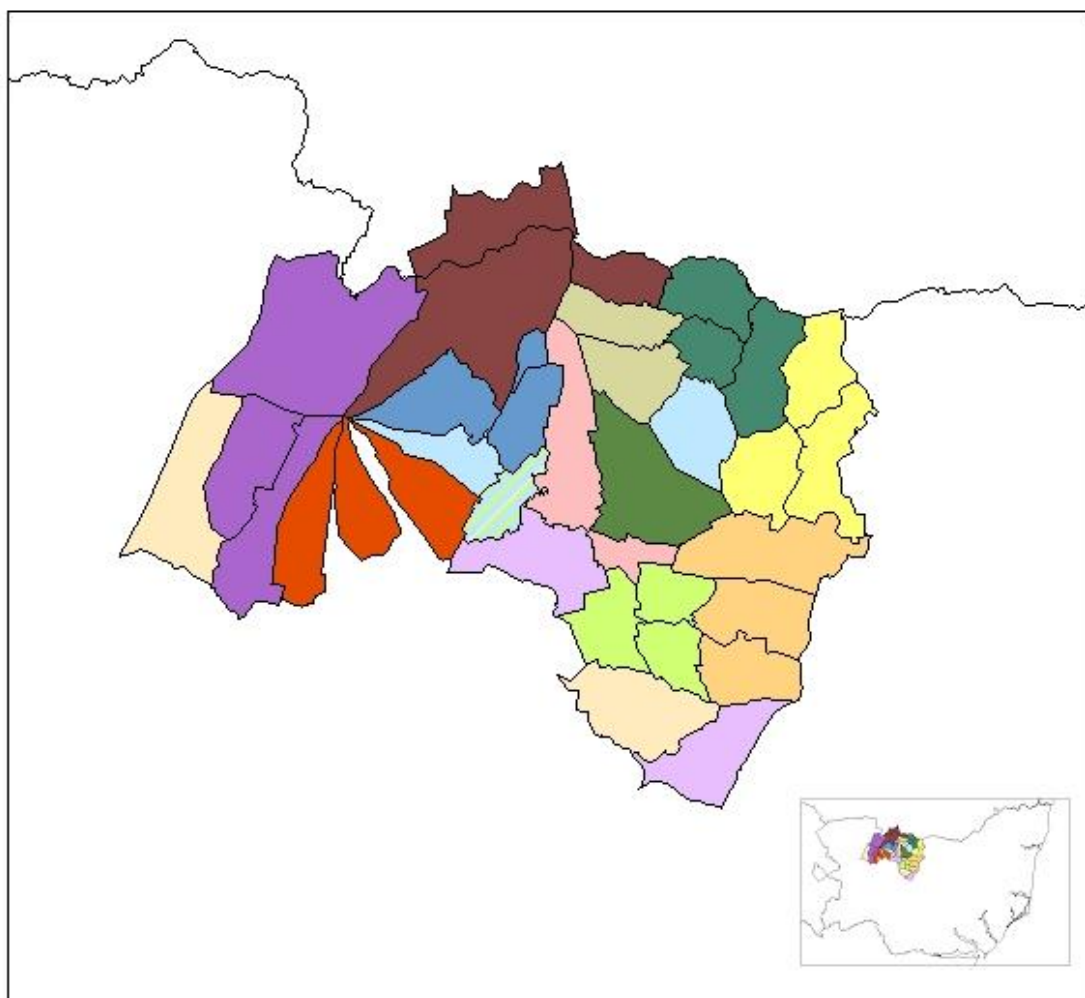
⁸⁶⁵ Hart, *Danelaw*, 93.

⁸⁶⁶ Campbell, ‘Hundreds and Letes’, 160-1.

⁸⁶⁷ Bailey, ‘Suffolk Domesday’, 16.

C).⁸⁶⁸ Davis acknowledged that the geld assessments were already fixed before this date for each vill, thus, following the creation of the double-hundred, ‘considerable ingenuity was required to obtain units of equal assessment.’⁸⁶⁹

Figure 22 Leets in Blackburn/Bradmere



However, if the geld assessments remained fixed for each vill and the leets were nothing ‘more than units of fiscal assessment’⁸⁷⁰ what purpose would a rearrangement of leets have after the creation of the double-hundred? It would have made no difference to the fiscal assessment to leave the arrangement of leets unchanged. The leets in this double-

⁸⁶⁸ *Kalendar*, xxx.

⁸⁶⁹ *Kalendar*, xxx.

⁸⁷⁰ *Kalendar*, xxv-xxvi, xxix-xxx; Campbell has disputed Davis’ claim that the leets had no courts or judiciary function of their own. Campbell, ‘Hundreds and Letes’, 157-8, 165; Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon State*, xxvi, 13-4. Douglas also believed they had a judicial function: Douglas, *East Anglia*, 192-201.

hundred were not all geographically contiguous, but the arrangements in Thingoe and Babergh were not either.⁸⁷¹ Moreover, Blackbourn and Bradmere themselves were not geographically separate, with eleven of the villis crossing the hundred boundaries. Rather than presuming that there was a rearrangement of leets after 1086, it seems more likely that for fiscal purposes the two hundreds were already administered as a double-hundred despite the persistence of two hundredal names.

This is supported by the total geld assessment for each hundred. Theoretically, the total for each hundred should equal £1. The totals for some of the Suffolk hundreds bore little relation to this figure, but the majority came close.⁸⁷² The totals for Blackbourn and Bradmere were £1 7s 9d and 11s 10½d respectively. Neither was close to £1, and nor were they neat proportions of the expected total. But together, their geld payments equalled £1 19s 7½d, remarkably close to what would be expected of a double-hundred.

Blackbourn and Bradmere were geographically intertwined, and within a century of Domesday had been merged to form a double-hundred. The geld assessments of their constituent villis added up to nearly exactly the amount expected from a double-hundred, and in proportions that suggest that they were not independently assessed. Surely then, despite the persistence of different hundredal names in Domesday, these hundreds were administered together from an earlier date. This would explain how the leets crossed hundredal boundaries and maintained uniform assessments, rather than presuming that a rearrangement of the leets took place after the hundreds were merged.

⁸⁷¹ *Kalendar*, xxx; Bailey, 'Suffolk Domesday', 16.

⁸⁷² *VCH Suffolk*, i, 361; Hart, *Danelaw*, 86-9.

Hundredal Revenues

The sheriff was ultimately responsible for the collection of hundredal revenues, though the actual collection would have devolved on his subordinates.⁸⁷³ Particularly for the earliest part of this period, the functioning of local administration is obscure. However, as the abbot of Bury St Edmunds effectively enjoyed shrieval rights in the eight and a half hundreds, the *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson can give some insight into the types of dues owed by hundreds in the late twelfth century.

The *Kalendar* describes only hundredal revenues, rather than any that the abbot could collect in his capacity as tenurial lord. These sums included hidage, sheriff's aid, *wardpenny* and *averpenny*.⁸⁷⁴ Except for hidage, charged at 1d per acre on the socage land, the payments were not directly relative to acreage. The fact that payments for guard service and carrying service were commuted to *wardpenny* and *averpenny*, and some of the suits of court were also given financial values, suggests a system of some antiquity; it therefore seems reasonable to presume that such hundredal dues had been collected for some time before the *Kalendar* was compiled.⁸⁷⁵ The commutation of services to financial payments may suggest a weakening of the hundredal community over time, as financial payments would not require the same communal effort as the actual fulfilment of these services.

As well as regular payments the crown could levy extraordinary fines and taxation. Certain of these were 'feudal' in nature, such as levying an aid for the knighting of the king's son or the marriage of his daughter. Other extraordinary revenue, such as

⁸⁷³ W.A. Morris, *The Medieval English Sheriff to 1300* (Manchester, 1927) 1, 41-3; Cam, *Hundred*, 1-8; R.C. Palmer, *The County Courts of Medieval England, 1150-1350* (Princeton, 1982), 28.

⁸⁷⁴ *Kalendar*, xxxii-xlvi.

⁸⁷⁵ *Kalendar*, xlvii.

taxation on moveables, used the vill, hundred and county units for assessment and collection. The frequency of these taxes increased after 1290, and coupled with harvest failures and military demands this must have negatively affected the peasantry.⁸⁷⁶ Though less frequently, taxation of movables had been employed over the previous hundred years, and it would have been felt by all but the very poorest of peasants.⁸⁷⁷ Whilst the rich would have been most able to avoid or bribe the collectors, the greatest burden probably fell upon those who were relatively poor, with just enough to come to the attention of those collecting the tax.⁸⁷⁸ The earlier taxes on movables were assessed upon individuals, so surviving returns, like the 1283 Blackbourn returns, provide extensive detail, including the name of each tax-payer. Though assessed on the basis of individual liability, the assessment and its returns were still structured within the units of vill and hundred.

Other charges made on the hundred as a whole indicate that the hundred was a unit with the ability to mediate these payments at a lower level. The 1275 Hundred Rolls record abuses by officials, generally involving the extraction of unlawful payments. It was stated that Richard de Ashwell, Hugh de Beccles and Robert de Melford extorted an extra £6 from Blackbourn hundred.⁸⁷⁹ Similarly, it was complained that fines of 19s for *beaupleder* had been extracted from Bunsty hundred since 1249.⁸⁸⁰ Examples of fines or exactions placed upon the whole hundred could be multiplied, some of which were perceived to be 'unjust', and others, such as amercements at the general eyre, that were an unavoidable result of involvement in local government.⁸⁸¹ It is possible that these

⁸⁷⁶ Maddicott, 'The English Peasantry', 2; Bailey, 'Peasant Welfare', 238.

⁸⁷⁷ Maddicott, 'The English Peasantry', 2; C. Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2005), 9.

⁸⁷⁸ Hilton, *Class Conflict*, 145.

⁸⁷⁹ *RH*, i, 155.

⁸⁸⁰ *RH*, i, 37, 38; Cam, *Hundred*, 117-8.

⁸⁸¹ Poole, *Obligations of Society*, 77.

sums were covered by individuals who had the funds in reserve, and then personally ensured that they received recompense from other inhabitants of the hundred. Reynolds suggested that the number of dues charged upon towns in common could imply that there was a common purse to cover such expenses.⁸⁸² It is possible that such common funds existed in vills and hundreds as well, though it is difficult to see who would have been trusted to look after them.

The payment of fines is not proof of a sense of community, but it does suggest that the hundred was recognised as a distinct unit, and that its internal organisation was sophisticated enough to meet financial demands, whether they were legitimate or not. Moreover, as with fines charged on entire vills, the need to allocate payment and to ensure that demands were met may have encouraged closer identification with the hundred as a unit of organisation.

3.3.2 The Hundred Court

The hundred court reached the zenith of its power in the late Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman period, before progressively losing jurisdiction to the county and other central courts across the twelfth century.⁸⁸³ Nevertheless, it retained its position as the nexus between local and central government.⁸⁸⁴ The normal legal interval between courts in the tenth and eleventh centuries was one month, but by the reigns of Henry II and John some hundreds had courts every two weeks.⁸⁸⁵ In 1234 Henry III ordered a standard interval of three weeks between courts and this remained the common interval

⁸⁸² Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 166-7.

⁸⁸³ Campbell, 'Hundreds and Letes', 156; S. Stewart, *The 1263 Surrey Eyre* (Woking, 2006), cxxxiii-cxxxiv; Palmer, *County*, 3; Cam, *Hundred*, 17-8. Also see *OHLE*, 50-5, 280-4, 554-5.

⁸⁸⁴ Cam, *Hundred*, 18; A. Musson, 'Twelve Good Men and True? The Character of Early Fourteenth-Century Juries', *Law and History Review*, 15, 1 (1997), 128.

⁸⁸⁵ *OHLE*, 51-3, 281, 554.

in Edward I's reign.⁸⁸⁶ In addition to these general courts, the sheriff's tourn was held in each hundred twice a year.⁸⁸⁷ These two courts required the attendance of a wider group of people than the three-weekly courts. Whilst pleas of petty offences were held at the regular hundred courts, from battery and brawls to trespass, debt and slander, the bi-annual tourns were the arena for the view of frankpledge and the collection of a lot of hundredal revenues.⁸⁸⁸ The hundred courts could also be used for a variety of other business, including the swearing in of officials, presentments by tithingmen and business relating to the assizes of bread and ale.⁸⁸⁹ Cases that could not be dealt with at the hundred court would then be transferred up to the county court or one of the king's central courts.

Bunsty hundred remained in the king's hand throughout the medieval period, whilst the abbot of Bury was lord of Blackburn. Langtree was appurtenant to the manor of Benson which changed hands over this period, eventually being granted to Henry III's brother Richard of Cornwall in 1244.⁸⁹⁰ From this point, lordship of Benson and the four and a half Chiltern hundreds was linked to the honour of Wallingford, which Richard had been granted in 1231.⁸⁹¹ Arguably, the identity of the hundredal lord would not have made a particular difference to the functioning of the hundred courts. Those in the king's hand would have been presided over by a bailiff appointed by the sheriff, whilst private hundreds were subject to the same rules and procedures, but the bailiff or steward was appointed by the lord, and the profits also went to that lord.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸⁶ Cam, *Hundred*, 168.

⁸⁸⁷ OHLE, 555-6.

⁸⁸⁸ Cam, *Hundred*, 17-8, 121-3, 181-3.

⁸⁸⁹ Cam, *Hundred*, 184.

⁸⁹⁰ For hundredal manors see: Cam, '*Manerium cum Hundredo*', 64-90.

⁸⁹¹ VCH *Oxfordshire*, viii, 3.

⁸⁹² OHLE, 281.

The attendance of suitors at the hundred court had to be enforced to enable it to function. These men acted as witnesses, judges and ‘depositories of local custom’.⁸⁹³ It was in the officials’ interest to maintain or increase the number of suitors, because this meant that there were more people who could be amerced for non-attendance or for procedural errors. This was a source of complaint and even in private hundreds kings attempted to control the practice of calling more men than was necessary.⁸⁹⁴ In the Hundred Rolls, suit at the hundred court is regularly specified as a tenurial obligation, implying that it was associated with particular land, rather than being general to the population. In Bottisham, Staine, Martin son of Eustace de Lada and Simon de Mora each owed suit to the hundred on behalf of the entire vill.⁸⁹⁵ However, suits of court are not recorded consistently in the Hundred Rolls, so it is difficult to estimate the exact number owed for each hundred. Moreover, other representatives of vills or tithings, along with litigants involved in each session were also obliged to attend, so the number could vary from session to session.⁸⁹⁶

The *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson contains a complete list of suits owed by Blackburn hundred in the late twelfth century; seventy-eight suits were owed for this double-hundred.⁸⁹⁷ The amount owed by each vill varied from one to five. Some suits were owed by individuals and others by parceners or other larger groups within the vill, such as one from all the sokemen in Wordwell. When lands were divided by inheritance or sale, suits to the hundred court were also divided. This tendency was already evident in Blackburn in the twelfth century, but was considerably more pronounced by the late thirteenth century. In the Hundred Rolls, the five suits which had been owed by Stanton

⁸⁹³ *Kalendar*, xxxi; *OHLE*, 281.

⁸⁹⁴ *Kalendar*, xxxi; Cam, *Hundred*, 168.

⁸⁹⁵ *RH*, ii, 488a.

⁸⁹⁶ *OHLE*, 554.

⁸⁹⁷ *Kalendar*, 35-6.

in the *Kalendar* were owed in various fractions by twenty-nine individuals.⁸⁹⁸ Sometimes officials attempted to force all parceners to attend the hundred court, even though the attendance should have been alternated.⁸⁹⁹ If each of these individuals were forced to attend every court then this would greatly increase attendance, but it seems more likely that those owing the smallest fragments commuted their obligation. If those owing part of a suit took it in turns to attend, then this would increase the number of people coming into contact with the court, but it would diffuse the strength of any community because the court would have been made up of different suitors each time.

Hundred courts often continued to meet at ancient meeting-places. These sites were well-known and the connection with the past may have added to the authority of the setting.⁹⁰⁰ Ease of access must have been of primary concern, but the sites were rarely at the central point of a hundred, so some inhabitants would have had much further to travel than others.⁹⁰¹ In fact, there was a tendency for meeting-places to be on the boundaries of administrative units, possibly because this was more likely to be neutral territory.⁹⁰²

The meeting-places of the three case study hundreds cannot be located with certainty, but there are some indications. Blackbourn hundred is named after the River Black Bourn, and it is probable that its meeting-place was on this stream. The meeting-place

⁸⁹⁸ *Suffolk Hundred*, 46-61.

⁸⁹⁹ *Cam, Hundred*, 174.

⁹⁰⁰ A. Sanmark and S.J. Semple, 'Places of Assembly: new discoveries in Sweden and England', *Fornvännen*, 103, 4 (2008), 252; A. Pantos, 'The location and form of Anglo-Saxon assembly-places: some 'moot points'' in *Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe*, eds. A. Pantos and S. Semple (Dublin, 2004), 174.

⁹⁰¹ A.L. Meaney, 'Hundred Meeting-Places in the Cambridge Region' in *Names, Places and People*, eds. A.R. Rumble and A.D. Mills (Stamford, 1997), 220; A. Pantos, '"On the Edge of Things": the Boundary Location of Anglo-Saxon Assembly Sites', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 12 (2003), 44.

⁹⁰² Meaney, 'Meeting-Places', 201; Pantos, 'Boundary Location', 38-40, 43, 47; Pantos, 'Assembly-Places', 169.

of Bradmere hundred, before it merged with Blackbourn, was probably at Broad Mere in Troston, adjacent to an ancient barrow.⁹⁰³ Bunsty hundred probably met at a site in Gayhurst now known as Bunsty farm.⁹⁰⁴ Langtree was named for the tree that would have marked its meeting-place, but its location is unknown.⁹⁰⁵ It seems likely that those living near these meeting-places would have been more frequently drawn into the hundredal gatherings, than those living on the opposite side of the hundred.

The significance of hundredal gatherings could be undermined by overlapping jurisdictions. Half of Langtree's vills were part of the honour of Wallingford, and their tenants would have owed suit to the honour rather than the hundred court.⁹⁰⁶ Moreover, the Hundred Rolls record that several inhabitants who were not tenants of the honour owed suit at Ewelme hundred.⁹⁰⁷ Langtree hundred was one of four and a half hundreds appurtenant to Benson manor in Ewelme, so this arrangement may have been of some antiquity.⁹⁰⁸ As some of the tenants owed suit at Ewelme, and so many owed suit to the honour of Wallingford, it is possible that there were no regular hundred courts in Langtree at all during this period.⁹⁰⁹ It seems likely that some separate meetings of Langtree hundred did occur, as it continued to present separately at the eyre and other government inquiries, suggesting that mechanisms were in place for the hundred to act as a unit. Nonetheless, the extent of overlapping jurisdictions suggests that hundredal

⁹⁰³ L. Dow, 'Ancient Monuments in Suffolk', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology and History*, 31, 3 (1969), 208.

⁹⁰⁴ R.A. Adkins and M.R. Petchey, 'Secklow Hundred Mound and Other Meeting Place Mounds in England', *The Archaeological Journal*, 141 (1984), 243.

⁹⁰⁵ M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* (Cambridge, 1953-4), 44; Meaney, 'Meeting-Places', 204-5.

⁹⁰⁶ *VCH Oxfordshire*, viii, 4-5.

⁹⁰⁷ For example Nicholas de Budiford in Checkendon. *RH*, ii, 779b.

⁹⁰⁸ For the importance of Benson as a royal vill in the Anglo-Saxon period see: Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, 27, 38-9, 49, 79, 108-10; Hepple, *The Chilterns*, 61-2; *VCH Oxfordshire*, xvi, 15-6.

⁹⁰⁹ A.H. Cooke, *The Early History of Mapledurham* (Oxford, 1925), 4. Harvey noted some confusion of jurisdiction at Cuxham, also pertinent to Wallingford and Ewelme: Harvey, *Cuxham*, 147.

assemblies were less likely to act as foci for the local community in this hundred than elsewhere.

In Blackbourn, the leet courts may have taken some of the business away from the hundred, and discouraged wider hundredal associations.⁹¹⁰ Abbot Samson's *Kalendar* records that the sokemen of Troston in Blackbourn paid 11s a year so that certain cases could be heard in the vill, rather than the hundred court.⁹¹¹ This reduced the jurisdiction of the hundred in this vill, and suggests that they saw the hundred court as an inconvenience. It is possible that this concession was granted because the hundred meeting-place for Bradmere had been in the vill of Troston. When Blackbourn and Bradmere were merged, it must have been frustrating for the inhabitants to travel to the court of the double-hundred, if they had previously been able to attend in their own vill. This exemption is unique in the case studies, but there were other circumstances that could lead to the withdrawal of suitors from the hundred court or the tourn. Numerous lords obtained the right to hold view of frankpledge, essentially removing groups of tenants from the sheriff's view, and sometimes from the obligation to attend the courts at all.

The intrusiveness of lordship would have impacted upon the hundred court, depending upon how successful lords were in withdrawing their tenants from attendance. Nonetheless, avoidance and withdrawal of suit should not be overemphasised. The hundred court could not have enjoyed the longevity it did unless it was possible to regularly attract a sufficient number of suitors for its business to be done. Though their

⁹¹⁰ Campbell, 'Hundreds and Letes', 157; Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon State*, xxvi, 13-4; *OHLE*, 283; Douglas, *East Anglia*, 192-201; F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction in England* (Southampton, 1908), 11-4; Homans, 'The Frisians', 194-6.

⁹¹¹ *Kalendar*, 44, xxxii; Campbell, 'Hundreds and Letes', 159.

significance in Langtree may be doubted, and they did not bring together all inhabitants in any hundred, the hundred courts still acted as a social and jurisdictional focus for the hundred.

3.3.3 Inquiries

The two surveys which act as bookends to this study are testament to the importance of the hundred as a unit of inquiry, though this is less immediately evident in Domesday Book. Domesday Book is arranged by county, and within that by tenant-in-chief; within the entry for each tenant-in-chief, each holding is arranged by hundred, so the hundred appears to be of low priority. However, the hundred was crucially important in the Domesday inquest and the process of compiling information.

The *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* is a Domesday satellite that covers most of Cambridgeshire.⁹¹² Unlike Domesday, this document is arranged first by hundred and then by vill, rather than by landholders. It has been shown that the *ICC* is likely to be an ‘original return’ of the Domesday inquest, illustrating that the information was originally compiled within a hundredal framework and only later rearranged into a ‘feudal’ one.⁹¹³ This shows just how integral the hundredal system was: though Domesday was to be arranged by tenant-in-chief, the information had to be collected by hundred first. Conceptually and practically the hundred was the obvious entity to use. Though Domesday was unique in its scale, this suggests that the inhabitants and officials were used to providing information about their hundred and could work quickly and easily within its framework.

⁹¹² *ICC*, 1-96. For an English translation: *VCH Cambridgeshire*, i, 400-27.

⁹¹³ Galbraith, ‘Making of Domesday’, 161-77; F. Thorn and C. Thorn, ‘The Writing of Great Domesday Book’ in *Domesday Book*, ed. E. Hallam and D. Bates (Stroud, 2001), 53.

As the name of the Hundred Rolls suggests, the hundred was also crucial for this survey nearly two centuries later. The 1279-80 Hundred Rolls are just one group of returns known by this name.⁹¹⁴ The earlier Hundred Rolls surveys were not primarily concerned with tenure in the way that the 1279-80 rolls were, but instead focused on the king's rights, his subjects' liberties and abuses of his officials. It is therefore apparent that the hundred could provide information on a range of subjects. The complex information provided by hundred jurors illustrates a staggering amount of local knowledge, but also suggests a sophisticated system of incorporating information gathered from other members of the community and from lordly administration.

Many more routine procedures also worked within the hundredal framework. Rather than disregarding this unit of Anglo-Saxon administration, the increasingly intrusive government of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries made use of it. In the Assize of Northampton in 1176, Henry II ordered knights of each hundred to report those suspected of crimes against the king's peace.⁹¹⁵ In surviving eyre records from the thirteenth century crown pleas are arranged by hundred, illustrating the order in which crimes were presented at the eyre. Inquiries were held at hundred level, the findings of which were presented at the county court and at the eyre by representatives of the hundred.

To the king and his administrators, the hundred was a recognisable and useful unit of inquiry. The structure of these inquiries reflects the needs of government, but the administration drew heavily upon people in the localities, who seem to have been comfortable working within the hundred. The men called to serve on hundred juries had

⁹¹⁴ Raban, *Second Domesday*, 15-26; Roffe, 'Hundred Rolls', 179-187.

⁹¹⁵ Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 178-81; Crouch, *Image*, 141.

to have a clear concept of the hundred boundaries and know what was going on in the hundred as a whole, otherwise their evidence would have had little value. There were always several years between eyres, but the leading men of the hundred would have known that they would need to provide information at some point in the future, which would have encouraged them to be actively involved in the hundred's affairs in the meantime.⁹¹⁶ This would have drawn them into contact with other 'lesser' inhabitants of the hundred, because they would have needed to share information with vill representatives. Inquiries, whether into tenure, liberties or crimes, relied on people of the hundred being actively involved and knowledgeable about their lords, their neighbours and their surroundings. Thus, using the hundred to collect information would have reinforced a sense of hundredal identity, particularly amongst those regularly called to serve.

3.3.4 The Hundred Jurors

Inquiries like those for Domesday and the Hundred Rolls drew upon existing records and the testimony of wider groups, but they also specifically charged groups of jurors to provide information about their hundred.⁹¹⁷ As the intrusiveness of royal government increased, juries were empanelled with increasing frequency for a wide range of tasks, meaning that they had to draw upon a wider group of men. Thus, though this practice was not new, it was used more extensively across the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and adapted to a variety of different purposes.

⁹¹⁶ Meekings, *Wiltshire*, 34-5.

⁹¹⁷ For the process of empanelling juries see: Cam, *Hundred*, 40-4, 78-82, 158-9.

Masschaele has emphasised the variety of roles undertaken by jurors, as well as the social heterogeneity of those called upon to serve.⁹¹⁸ Earlier studies of the thirteenth-century jurors include Vinogradoff's attempt to establish their 'class sympathy' (with the conclusion that they favoured seigneurial interests), and Kosminsky's evaluation of their landed resources.⁹¹⁹ More recently, Asaji considered the landed resources and status of the Cambridgeshire eyre jurors in the 1260s, and showed that they were not necessarily influenced by the political loyalties of their lords during the period of reform and rebellion.⁹²⁰ Stewart used jury panels from Surrey eyres to show that there was a strong hundredal community within Surrey, though some jurors did have interests beyond the hundred.⁹²¹

This study will start by discussing the jurors who acted in the Domesday inquiry, but its main focus will be on the hundred jurors empanelled at the eyres and Hundred Rolls inquiries of the thirteenth century, attempting to identify the type of men who served, and whether they formed a hundred community.

The Domesday Jurors

For most of the country, nothing is known about the men who were called upon to provide information for the Domesday inquiry. However, the *ICC* and *IE*, two Domesday 'satellites', provide the names of the eight jurors empanelled for each hundred across Cambridgeshire and parts of Hertfordshire. Though little can be

⁹¹⁸ J. Masschaele, *Jury, State and Society in Medieval England* (New York, 2008), 1, 12, 157. See also, A.J. Musson, 'Sub-keepers and Constables: The Role of Local Officials in Keeping the Peace in Fourteenth-Century England', *EHR*, 117, 470 (2002), 20.

⁹¹⁹ Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 155; Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 19-23, 258-70.

⁹²⁰ K. Asaji, *The Angevin Empire and the Community of the Realm in England* (Kansai, 2010), 222, 265-70.

⁹²¹ Stewart, *Surrey Eyre*, cxxxiii-cxlv. For other studies, see: Green, *Verdict*, 3-102; S.L. Waugh, 'Reluctant Knights and Jurors: Respites, Exemptions and Public Obligations in the Reign of Henry III', *Speculum*, 58, 4 (1983), 937-86; Musson, 'Twelve Good Men', 115-144.

established about these jurors, it is known that each hundred was represented by four Frenchmen and four Englishmen. Domesday Book is the ultimate record of communication between Englishmen and newcomers, and the choice of these jurors is evidence of interaction and assimilation only twenty years after the Conquest.⁹²²

None of the three main case study hundreds fall within this sample, but the jurors for Staine hundred are recorded.⁹²³ Frustratingly, none of the eight men who acted for Staine can be identified as 1086 landholders in Domesday. One, Huscarl of Swaffham, was a landholder in 1066, and it is difficult to envisage how he would have maintained the necessary status to act as a juror if he had been entirely dispossessed.⁹²⁴ Lewis has shown that fewer than half of the jurors can be found in the record, but rather than presuming the remainder to be landless, it seems likely that they were either tenants of the third tenurial level, generally unrecorded in Domesday, or unrecorded lessees of manors.⁹²⁵ Only one identifiable juror was a tenant-in-chief, and most others were of modest standing.⁹²⁶

The hundred jurors in the thirteenth century

It seems likely that a similar class was called upon to act as jurors in the thirteenth century, though by this point the frequency of service required meant that the group was more practiced for the role.⁹²⁷ The three case studies are not evenly represented by surviving jury panels. Just one panel from the 1286-7 eyre survives for Blackbourn;

⁹²² H.M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066-c.1220* (Oxford, 2003), 46-7.

⁹²³ ICC, 11-2; IE, 98; Lewis, 'Domesday Jurors', 17-44.

⁹²⁴ GDB 195-195v (Cambridgeshire 14,64).

⁹²⁵ Lewis, 'Domesday Jurors', 26-7.

⁹²⁶ Williams, *English*, 87.

⁹²⁷ Meekings, *Wiltshire*, 34-5.

seven panels survive for Bunsty;⁹²⁸ and seven for Langtree.⁹²⁹ The landed holdings of those jurors who acted between 1268 and 1287 will be explored using the Hundred Rolls, a total of three panels for Langtree and four panels for Bunsty. Three panels from Staine hundred will also be considered for comparison.⁹³⁰ As the rolls for Blackburn are fragmentary, the 1286-7 Blackburn jurors will be considered separately below.

Not all of the men who acted as jurors can be identified in the Hundred Rolls. Of a possible thirty-six jurors for Langtree, eight could not be identified and eight served more than once, meaning that nineteen men appear in Table 44; of a possible fifty jurors in Bunsty, seven served more than once and twelve cannot be identified, so twenty-eight men appear in Table 43; in Staine, of thirty-six jurors, six men cannot be identified and two served more than once, so twenty-eight men appear in Table 45, a total of seventy-five jurors across the three hundreds.

The only jurors for whom the data can be representative are those who served in 1279-80, as the Hundred Rolls surveyed their lands at the exact time they served. Therefore, it is particularly troubling that not all of the 1279-80 jurors can be identified in the rolls for Staine and Bunsty. It seems unlikely that the missing jurors had no lands in their hundred. Instead this implies that the Hundred Rolls are not an exhaustive record of landholding, so the lands of some of the other jurors may be underrepresented too. It is unsurprising that jurors who served at other times cannot be identified in the rolls, as those who served earlier could have died or sold their land, and those who served later may have only come into their lands after the Hundred Rolls were compiled. Even those

⁹²⁸ Eyres: 1241, 1247, 1262, 1272, 1286; HR 1274-5, 1279-80.

⁹²⁹ Eyres: 1241, 1247, 1261, 1268, 1285; HR 1255, 1279-80.

⁹³⁰ Eyres: 1261, 1268, 1286; HR: 1279-80.

who can be identified may have been holding more or less land when they actually served as a juror.

Table 43 The Bunsty Jurors

	Name	Vill	Hides	Virgates	Acres	Calc. Acres
1272	William of Ravenstone	Ravenstone, Stoke Golding.	0.0	0.0	22.5	22.5
1272	John Dispensator	Hanslope	0.0	0.0	30.0	30.0
1272	John Gosce	Stoke Goldington, Eakley	0.0	0.0	14.0	14.0
1272	Henry Prat	Weston Underwood	0.0	0.8	1.0	13.0
1272, 74, 79, 86	William of Abington	Lavendon	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
1272, 74, 86	Stephen Thebaud	Weston Underwood	0.0	0.8	0.0	12.0
1272, 79	Adam Franklyn	Lathbury	0.0	4.0	0.0	64.0
1274	John fitzJohn of Hanslope	Hanslope	0.0	0.0	188.0	188.0
1274	Geoffrey le Goys	Lavendon	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
1274	John Harlewyn	Lathbury	0.0	2.0	0.0	32.0
1274	William le Jevene	Lathbury	0.0	1.0	0.0	16.0
1274	Adam Meriet	Hanslope	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0
1274, 79	John de Morewell	Lathbury, Stoke Goldington	0.0	1.0	37.0	53.0
1279	Henry Wynegos	Haversham	0.0	0.0	18.0	18.0
1279	John son of Robert	Lavendon	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5
1279	Ralph Trice	Lavendon	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
1279	Simon of Woughton	Weston Underwood	0.0	1.8	0.0	28.0
1279	William of Bottlisford	Lathbury	0.0	0.5	0.0	8.0
1279, 86	Roger of Birchmore	Hanslope	0.0	0.0	57.0	57.0
1279, 86	Roger de Morewell	Stoke Goldington	0.0	0.0	27.5	27.5
1279, 86	William Lupus	Hanslope	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
1286	William de Noers	Gayhurst, Weston Und.	4.5	0.0	0.0	288.0
1286	Miles of Hastings	Stoke Goldington	0.0	0.0	113.8	113.8
1286	William Mortimer	Eakley	0.0	0.0	7.5	7.5
1286	Thomas Chamberlain	Hanslope, Ravenstone	0.0	0.0	54.0	54.0
1286	John de Lovent	Gayhurst	0.0	0.0	188.0	188.0
1286	John de Beauchamp	Lavendon	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
1286	Adam de Fortho	Weston Underwood	0.0	0.0	41.0	41.0
Mean 1272	-	-	-	-	-	22.9
Mean 1274	-	-	-	-	-	42.0
Mean 1279	-	-	-	-	-	29.8
Mean 1286	-	-	-	-	-	74.5
Mean Total	-	-	-	-	-	51.0
1272 Total	7	-	4.5	1.0	201.5	505.5
1274 Total	8	-	4.5	0.8	200.0	500.0
1279 Total	11	-	0.0	7.8	473.5	597.5
1286 Total	12	-	4.5	3.0	214.3	550.3
Total	28	-	4.5	11.8	951.8	1,427.8

Table 44 The Langtree Jurors

Juror	Name	Vill	Carucates/ Hides	Virgates	Acres	Calc. Acres
1268	Geoffrey English	Newnham, Mongewell	0.0	3.0	0.0	75.0
1268	Richard Simeon	Crowmarsh	0.0	1.0	0.0	25.0
1268, 79, 85	John de la Dene	Newnham, Mongewell	0.0	2.3	0.0	58.3
1268, 79	William of Whitchurch	Whitchurch	0.0	0.0	7.0	7.0
1268, 79	Richard de la Lee	Mapledurham	0.0	1.0	0.0	25.0
1268, 79	Walter de Cruce	Newnham	0.0	3.0	0.0	75.0
1279	John de Burwesfeld	Mongewell, North Stoke	1.0	3.3	0.0	181.3
1279	Walter le Waleys	Goring	1.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
1279	Robert le Bruer	Whitchurch, Newnham	0.0	1.0	0.0	25.0
1279	John Huberd	Newnham	0.0	3.0	0.0	75.0
1279, 85	John de Chausy	Mapledurham	2.0	0.0	0.0	200.0
1279, 85	William of Hardwick	Whitchurch	0.0	2.0	0.0	50.0
1279, 85	Richard Morin	Newnham	0.0	6.0	0.0	150.0
1279, 85	Peter de Hull	Whitchurch	0.0	3.0	0.0	75.0
1285	John Marmion	Checkendon, Little Stoke	4.0	2.0	0.0	450.0
1285	Gilbert de Chalcore	Goring	0.0	1.0	0.0	25.0
1285	William Morin	Newnham	0.0	0.5	0.0	12.5
1285	William Belebuche	Goring	0.0	0.5	0.0	12.5
1285	William de Wyk	Crowmarsh	0.0	0.5	0.0	12.5
Mean 1268	-	-	-	-	-	44.2
Mean 1279	-	-	-	-	-	85.1
Mean 1285	-	-	-	-	-	104.6
Mean Total	-	-	-	-	-	86.0
Total 1268	6	-	0.0	10.3	7.0	265.3
Total 1279	12	-	4.0	24.6	7.0	1,021.5
Total 1285	10	-	6.0	17.8	0.0	1,045.8
Overall Total	19	-	8.0	22.8	7.0	1,634.1

Table 45 The Staine Jurors

Year	Name	Vill	Virgates	Acres	Acres Calc
1268	Adam son of Roger	Little Wilbraham	0.0	26.5	26.5
1268	Alan son of Thomas	Great Wilbraham	0.0	21.0	21.0
1268	Hugh Blund	Bottisham, Swaffham Bulbeck	1.8	65.4	117.9
1268	John Clerk	Swaffham Prior	0.0	14.5	14.5
1268	Peter Picot	Bottisham	0.0	17.0	17.0
1268	Richard Galien	Great Wilbraham, Bottisham	0.0	37.5	37.5
1268	Robert ad portam ecclesiam	Great Wilbraham	0.0	6.0	6.0
1268	Richard Clerk ⁹³¹	Bottisham	1.0	41.5	71.5
1268, 86	William son of Hugh	Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck	0.0	57.8	57.8
1279	Bartholomew Clerk	Little Wilbraham	0.0	22.0	22.0
1279	Geoffrey ad Pontem	Swaffham Prior	0.0	4.0	4.0
1279	John de Haverhill	Swaffham Bulbeck	0.0	28.0	28.0
1279	John son of Simon	Great Wilbraham	0.0	20.5	20.5
1279	Richard Pichard	Bottisham, Stow-cum-Quy	0.0	13.5	13.5
1279	Roger of London	Great Wilbraham	0.0	12.0	12.0
1279	Thomas Clerk	Bottisham	0.0	0.0	0.0 ⁹³²
1279	Thomas Galien	Little Wilbraham	0.3	0	7.5
1279	William Prat	Bottisham	0.0	1.0	1.0
1279, 86	Ralph of Queye	Stow-cum-Quy	0.0	40.0	40.0
1286	Andrew son of Roger	Little Wilbraham	0.0	30.3	30.3
1286	Geoffrey Milum	Swaffham Prior	0.0	11.0	11.0
1286	John son of Ivo	Little Wilbraham	0.0	35.8	35.8
1286	John son of Walter	Swaffham Prior, Reach	0.0	5.5	5.5
1286	Martin de Lada	Bottisham	2.0	0.8	60.8
1286	Nicholas Pichard	Bottisham	0.0	0.0	0.0 ⁹³³
1286	Robert Sorel	Swaffham Bulbeck	0.0	60.0	60.0
1286	Walkelin of Queye	Stow-cum-Quy, Little Wilbraham	0.0	88.8	88.8
1286	William d'Engayne	Stow-cum-Quy	0.0	120.0	120.0
Mean 1268	-	-	-	-	41.1
Mean 1279	-	-	-	-	14.9
Mean 1286	-	-	-	-	46.3
Total Mean	-	-	-	-	33.2
1268 Total	9	-	2.8	287.1	369.6
1279 Total	10	-	0.3	141.0	148.5
1286 Total	11	-	2.0	449.8	509.8
Total	28	-	5.0	780.1	930.4

⁹³¹ The lands are based on those held by William son of Richard Clerk in the HR.

⁹³² Thomas held 2 crofts.

⁹³³ Nicholas held ½ croft.

Table 46 The mean holdings of the jurors

Year	Langtree	Staine	Bunsty
1268/1272	44.2	41.1	22.9
1274	-	-	42.0
1279-80	85.1	14.9	29.8
1285-6	104.6	46.3	74.5
Average	86.0	33.2	51.0

Bearing in mind some of these problems with the evidence, the most striking feature of Tables 43-45 is the variety in the jurors' resources. The summary in Table 46 illustrates a clear geographical difference, with the Langtree jurors holding more than their Bunsty counterparts, and considerably more than those who served in Staine.⁹³⁴ There is also variety within each hundred. In Langtree, a man with just seven acres served alongside a man with 200 acres in 1279-80. In each of the four Bunsty juries there was at least one man with only five acres, whilst others measured their lands in hundreds of acres. Those with more land are probably better represented within this sample, because they were more likely to have maintained their position over time.⁹³⁵ Therefore, amongst those who cannot be identified there may have been many who just held a few acres when they were called to serve.

The land these men held must be placed in a local context. The average juror held considerably less in Staine than in Langtree, but then the average landholding was smaller in Staine too: 64 percent of Staine's population in 1279-80 held five acres or less, so even jurors with just six or seven acres would have been in the top 35 percent of the population. By contrast, only 26 percent of the Langtree landholders held five acres

⁹³⁴ This supports Kosminsky's finding that Oxfordshire jurors tended to be more substantial men: Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 268.

⁹³⁵ Coss, Carpenter and Polden, showed that knights with less land were more likely to have suffered from economic decline or failure than those with more land. Coss, *Origins*, 84-5, 94-6, 106-8; D.A. Carpenter, 'Was there a crisis of the knightly class in the thirteenth-century? The Oxfordshire Evidence', *EHR*, 377 (1980), 729-30, 739; Polden, 'Crisis of the knightly class', 55. See also Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 180-4.

or less, and the majority held a half-virgate at least. In both hundreds, it was rare for jurors to be amongst the poorest peasants. Instead, the least substantial jurors tended to have holdings that were ‘average’ for the hundred, whilst the most substantial jurors came from the ranks of the important free men and smaller manorial lords. Therefore, the differences in the juries can be directly related to differences in landholding in each hundred. When the hundred bailiff had to empanel a jury he was obliged to call on smallholders by necessity in Staine hundred, whilst this was much rarer in Langtree. However, a smallholding in Staine was more viable than it was in Langtree, so the apparent gulf between the Staine and Langtree jurors may not have been as large as the averages imply.

Even though it was rare for the poorest peasants to be called upon, there was a social gulf between some of the jurors. Did the wealthier men have more influence on the jury’s decisions?⁹³⁶ Two ‘electors’ were chosen by the bailiff of each hundred, and they had the responsibility of choosing the other ten jurors who would serve alongside them. The electors were supposed to be knights, and they were generally amongst the most substantial men on the juries.⁹³⁷ However, the electors chose jurors with a variety of resources, suggesting that even those with a few acres were not beneath their notice and were deemed ‘worthy’ of serving alongside them. Though the wealthier jurors often had tenants of their own, they rarely packed out a jury with their own men. Whilst the electors may have selected men who they could influence, it still suggests that they were happy to be associated with them: it was conceptually possible to group a peasant with a few acres alongside a lord of a small manor, suggesting that hierarchies of status may not have been as rigid as one would expect.

⁹³⁶ Reynolds, *Kingdoms*, 247, 251, 332; Masschaele, *Jury*, 195-7.

⁹³⁷ Cam, *Hundred*, 81.

However, there was some concern amongst contemporaries that those being called to serve on juries were too poor, and more substantial jurors should have been chosen. This has been associated with a decline in the numbers of men taking up knighthood, coupled with an increase in the administrative burden this class was expected to undertake.⁹³⁸ The 1285 Statute of Westminster stated that sheriffs and bailiffs had been ‘oppressing’ those subject to them by summoning poor jurors and allowing richer men to bribe their way out of service.⁹³⁹ It is possible that this statute had the desired effect, as the juries empanelled for Staine and Bunsty in 1286 were made up of more substantial men than had served previously. This was not necessarily because all of the jurors had more land, rather that each panel contained one or two men of higher status. This cannot be directly associated with the statute however, as the same tendency is evident in Langtree hundred, though the Oxfordshire eyre had taken place earlier in 1285. It is possible that officials had already started to recognise the need for richer men to be better represented on the juries even before the statute was issued. However, it should be noted that the complaint that poor men served whilst rich men bribed their way out of it, is not supported by the Blackbourn evidence. The 1274-5 Hundred Rolls list nine people in Blackbourn who paid so they did not have to serve, seven of whom can be identified in the 1283 tax returns. These seven on average had movables valued at £2 15s, whilst the average for those who actually served in 1286-7 was nearly £10. Perhaps it was easier for officials to extort money from men of lesser means, who had less power and influence of their own.

⁹³⁸ Faulkner, ‘Transformation of Knighthood’, 1-23; Carpenter, ‘Crisis of the knightly class’, 737-8; Polden, ‘Crisis of the Knightly Class’, 55; Coss, *Origins*, 71-4, 79, 82, 94-108; Postan, *Medieval Economy*, 180-4; Crouch, *Image*, 146-7; Dyer, *Making*, 148-9. See also: Waugh, ‘Reluctant Knights’, 937-86.

⁹³⁹ *EHD*, iii, 450.

It was relatively rare for a juror to be called to serve for a hundred which did not contain his main holding, but it was not unheard of. William d'Engayne was lord of a manor in Gidding Engayne, Huntingdonshire, as well as in Stow-cum-Quy in Staine.⁹⁴⁰ Fulk of Rycote was a juror for Bunsty hundred in 1274-5, but his manor in Lavendon was not recorded in the surviving Bunsty Hundred Roll, because the record is incomplete for that vill.⁹⁴¹ Fulk had inherited this land from his cousin, Humphrey Visdelou, but he had other lands elsewhere, notably a substantial manor in the vill of Rycote, Oxfordshire, from which his family took their name.⁹⁴²

The examples above show that limiting consideration to just one hundred can severely underestimate a juror's landed interests. However, using what survives of the Hundred Rolls and other records, it seems unlikely that the majority of these jurors had substantial interests elsewhere: men like Fulk and William with large manors in different counties were the exceptions. What is more, it is the jurors with the largest holdings in their respective hundred that were more likely to hold elsewhere. Therefore, though their holdings will be underestimated in absolute terms, their relative position compared to the other jurors will not be substantially altered.⁹⁴³

Similarly, consideration of rental income does not substantially alter the impression gained of the jurors through their demesne land alone. In Langtree hundred, just four of the jurors had tenants, and for two of these the amounts were negligible. The other two were lords of manors, and John de Chausy received £3 8s 4½d plus labour services from

⁹⁴⁰ *RH*, ii, 619-20a.

⁹⁴¹ Fulk's services are described in the 1274-5 inquiry: *RH*, ii, 37b. See also: A.C. Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington: The early history of the region of Buckinghamshire lying to the north-east of Newport Pagnell* (London, 1979), 151-3.

⁹⁴² *RH*, ii, 787a-b.

⁹⁴³ Stewart found that some hundred jurors in Surrey had cross-boundary interests, but they were in the minority: *Surrey Eyre*, cxl.

his twelve tenants, whilst John Marmion received £25 19s from his thirty-six tenants. In Staine, thirteen of the jurors had at least one tenant, but most of them had fewer than five acres held from them. The one exception to this was William d'Engayne. In Bunsty, none of the jurors came near John Marmion in Langtree in terms of rental income, but some received relatively substantial rents, such as Roger of Birchmore who received £4 16s 4d. William de Noers, lord of Gayhurst, was the most substantial landlord amongst the Bunsty jurors, receiving £8 12s 11½d. In some cases rental income substantially increases the estimation of these jurors' wealth. However, all of these men were amongst the most substantial jurors in their hundreds anyway. Considering rental incomes increases the differentiation between richest and poorest jurors, rather than changing general impressions.

Based on the tendency for Staine jurors to hold less land than those in Bunsty and Langtree, one would expect that the Blackbourn jurors would also hold relatively less, because fragmentation of holdings was also advanced in this hundred. Table 47 lists the twenty-four jurors who served for Blackbourn double-hundred in 1286-7, their lands in the 1279-80 Hundred Rolls and their moveables in the 1283 tax. This tax only covered certain surplus goods, so was not representative of total wealth. Moreover, landholders would have attempted to ensure underassessment, either through colluding with assessors or concealing some of their movables.⁹⁴⁴ Such tactics would have favoured the richer men with greater influence, so proportionately the tax may have fallen more heavily on the poorer people in the hundred, though the very poorest were exempt. Nonetheless, comparison of the tax assessments and what survives of the Hundred Rolls will still provide an indication of the relative position of these men.

⁹⁴⁴ Maddicott, 'The English Peasantry', 8, 10; Harvey, *Cuxham*, 104-9.

Table 47 The Blackburn Jurors

Juror Name	1279-80 Hundred Rolls		1283 Tax	
	Vill	Acreage	Vill	Total Movables
Roger Martlesham, bailiff	-	-	-	-
Ralph of Bardwell	Bardwell	110	Bardwell	£14 5s 3d
J[ohn] son of William of Bardwell	Bardwell	8	Bardwell	£21 13s 9d
	Stanton	1	Sapiston	£2 15s 0½ d
	Total	9	Total	£24 8s 9½d
Richard de Suthinton	Stowlangtoft	1.5	Bardwell	£5 2s 6d
R[obert] ultra aquam	Bardwell	26	Bardwell	£9 19s 6d
J[ohn] of Hunston	Hunston	64	Hunston	£15 4s 0d
W[illiam] of Langham	-	-	Langham	£10 6s 6d
Ralph Ward of Weston	-	-	Market Weston	£3 15s 8d
Gilbert son of Andrew of Ashfield	-	-	Great Ashfield	£15 5s 8d
Geoffrey the Marshall of Troston	Rickinghall	40	Troston	£5 11s 3d
	Walsham	8		
	Troston	8		
	Total	56		
Ralph Thorold of Hepworth	Stanton	4	Hepworth	£4 7s 2d
W[illiam] of Playford	Barnham	145	Barnham	£3 15s 6d
H[enry] Hoverhe of Culford	Culford	18	Culford	£6 6s 4d
R[obert] de Blakeberewe	-	-	Ixworth	£2 19s 9d
Richard Chaumpain	-	-	-	-
Matthew of Thelnetham	-	-	-	-
Bartholomew of Livermere	Little Livermere	180.5	Little Livermere	£7 2s 6d
Roger of Walsham	-	-	Walsham	£6 2s 1d
Reginald Peché	Stowlangtoft	320	Stowlangtoft	£16 0s 0d
Robert the Engineer	Market Weston	80	Market Weston	£16 12s 10d
	Knettishall	49.5		
	Total	129.5		
W[illiam] of Thelnetham	Troston	32.5	Troston	£12 11s 0d
			Barnham	£3 14s 2d
			Total	£16 5s 2d
W[illiam] of Livermere	Little Livermere	86	Little Livermere	£3 0s 6d
William Hovel (Lord R. Hovel in Tax)	-	-	Market Weston	£1 10s 0d
W[illiam] de Botinhale	Elmswell	4	Great Ashfield	£12 8s 4d
Mean	-	79	-	£9 10s 11d
Total	15	1,186	21	£200 9s 3½d

Twenty of the jurors can be identified in the tax, along with one person who may be a relative of a juror. The average assessment of the movables held by these twenty-one men was £9 10s 11d, a value in the top 4 percent of tax payers in the entire double-hundred. Lord Robert Hovel, possibly a relative of the William who served in 1286-7, had the lowest assessment, but still his moveables were amongst the top 23 percent in

the returns. He does not appear in the surviving 1279-80 Hundred Rolls, but the 1275 rolls confirm that he held a manor in Market Weston, as complaints were made about his bailiff.⁹⁴⁵ Perhaps Robert's assessment was relatively low because most of his income was in rents and services.

The mean holding of the fifteen jurors that can be identified in the surviving Hundred Rolls was seventy-nine acres, similar to the average for those who served in Bunsty in 1286. However, in almost every case this underestimates their actual holdings. Certain of the jurors held substantial lands from St Edmunds, such as Reginald Peche, with a 320 acre demesne plus tenants on his Stowlangtoft manor. However, William of Thelnetham had a high tax assessment in Troston (£12 11s) as well as being assessed in Barnham (£3 14s 2d), but the Hundred Rolls just attribute thirty-two and a half acres to him in Barnham. John son of William of Bardwell had the highest tax assessment of all of the jurors, the eighth highest in the entire hundred out of over 1,300 tax-payers, yet in the Hundred Rolls he held only eight acres in Bardwell and one acre in Stanton. Other extents show that he held another half-acre in Bardwell and six acres in Ixworth Thorpe, but this does not substantially raise his profile.⁹⁴⁶ But, a list of knights' fees from 1346 records that Thomas, son and heir of John of Bardwell, held a quarter of a knight's fee in Bardwell from Edmund of Pakenham, as John had previously held it from William of Pakenham.⁹⁴⁷ Thus, John son of William the juror held a manor in Bardwell that was not included in the Hundred Rolls because he held it from the Pakenhams rather than the abbot.

⁹⁴⁵ *RH*, ii, 158.

⁹⁴⁶ Hudson, 'Three Manorial Extents', 45; TNA C133/89/8.

⁹⁴⁷ *Feudal Aids*, v, 72.

Therefore, all of the evidence suggests that if more information was available, the average holding of the Blackbourn jurors would actually increase, making the jurors' holdings particularly substantial in the context of their hundred. In Suffolk, a county populated by small manors with lords of local importance, there were more men of this rank available to serve on juries, whilst elsewhere manorial lords tended to be more important and rarely served on hundred juries. This was particularly likely to be the case in a hundred like Blackbourn, where the dominance of the abbot of St Edmunds ensured that most manorial lords were local men rather than greater lords. Of the twenty-eight jurors who can be identified for Staine hundred from 1268-86, only one held more than 100 acres; of the fifteen Blackbourn jurors mentioned in the Hundred Rolls, five held more than 100 acres, and at least two of the others held manors that were unrecorded. The general impression is that overall the Blackbourn jurors were more substantial men than those who served in the other three case studies. Their holdings seem to be at least on a par with the Langtree jurors, but in the context of local conditions in Blackbourn this would actually suggest a higher status.

Consideration of the jurors who served for these four hundreds has illustrated great variety. In Staine, Langtree and Bunsty, the poorest jurors tended to have holdings that were 'average' for a peasant in a local context. By contrast, fewer of the Blackbourn jurors can be characterised as 'peasants' at all, and even the poorest in terms of his movables ranked amongst the top 23 percent in the entire hundred. The evidence collected here suggests that if hundred juries did act as a focus for a 'hundred community' its membership may have been more limited in Blackbourn than in the other hundreds, which is surprising considering the fluidity of landholding and status in this region.

A 'community' of hundred jurors?

Whether appearing together on a jury constitutes evidence of community, would depend on frequency of service and other opportunities for interaction.⁹⁴⁸ Stewart's study of Surrey found that there was a core group of individuals and families who regularly served on juries.⁹⁴⁹ Tables 48 and 49 show the frequency of service in Langtree and Bunsty using surviving panels from the thirteenth century.

Frequent service is particularly pronounced in Langtree hundred. These seven juries of twelve men each could potentially have contained eighty-four men, but instead they were staffed by just forty-eight men. Therefore, those who served just once across these seven juries made up only 32 percent of the potential jurors. In Bunsty, this tendency is slightly less pronounced, as fifty-six men fulfilled the possible eighty-seven positions, meaning that 43 percent of the potential opportunities to act as juror were taken up by someone who just acted once.

It is possible that more than one man shared the same name. However, if that was the case it could be a relative, and this too would support there being a core group who fulfilled administrative roles. Some other family connections can be surmised. Ralph of Hardwick who served in Langtree in 1241 and 1247 could be related to William of Hardwick who served in 1268 and 1279. Ralph served alongside Roger of Whitchurch in 1241, and he was also married to Roger's cousin.⁹⁵⁰ John de la Hulle served in Langtree in 1255 and 1261, and Peter de la Hulle served in 1279 and 1285. Stephen Baldwin served in Langtree in 1268 and Richard Baldwin in 1285. Three men surnamed

⁹⁴⁸ Meekings, *Wiltshire*, 34.

⁹⁴⁹ Stewart, *Surrey Eyre*, cxxxiii-cxlv. See also: *Buckinghamshire, 1286*, 41-2.

⁹⁵⁰ *Roll and Writ File of the Berkshire Eyre of 1248*, ed. M.T. Clanchy (London, 1973), 75, 548, 678.

‘de Stallis’ appeared on Langtree juries: Stephen de Stallis in 1247 and Alexander and Nicholas de Stallis both in 1255.⁹⁵¹

Table 48 Langtree Jurors: Frequency of Service

Name	1241	1247	1261	1268	1285	Total eyres	1255	1279	Total HR	Total
William de Wyk	Elec	x	x		x	4	x		1	5
William Morin	Elec	x			x	3	x		1	4
Geoffrey English	x	x		Elec		3	x		1	4
Walter le Waleys	x	x	x			3		x	1	4
John de la Dene			Def	x	x	3		x	1	4
Robert of Mapledurham	x	Elec				2	x		1	3
Gilbert Chalcore			x		x	2	x		1	3
Walter de Cruce			x	x		2		x	1	3
Richard de la Lee			x	x		2		x	1	3
Ralph of Hardwick	x	x				2			0	2
William Makeneye	x	x				2			0	2
John de Hay	x		Elec			2			0	2
Robert of Goring		x	Def			2			0	2
Richard Huchel			x	x		2			0	2
Richard Morin					x	1		x	1	2
William of Hardwick					Elec	1		x	1	2
William of Whitchurch				x		1		x	1	2
John de Chausy					Elec	1		x	1	2
Peter de la Hulle					x	1		x	1	2
William de la Beche		x				1	x		1	2
John de la Hulle [Whitchurch]			Elec			1	x		1	2
John de Bereford				Elec		1			0	1
Thomas le Cornur				x		1			0	1
Walter de Tonfield				x		1			0	1
Alan Medicus				x		1			0	1
Stephen Baldwin				x		1			0	1
Richard Simeon				x		1			0	1
John Marmion					x	1			0	1
Richard Baldwin					x	1			0	1
William Belebuche					x	1			0	1
Robert de Burnham					x	1			0	1
Nicholas of Mongewell	x					1			0	1
Roger of Whitchurch	x					1			0	1
John Munsorel	x					1			0	1
William Gerard	x					1			0	1
Bartholomew de Badelesmere		Elec				1			0	1
Thomas Reynfrey		x				1			0	1
Stephen de Stallis		x				1			0	1
William le Page			x			1			0	1
John de la Hulle of Stoke			x			1			0	1
John de Burwesfeld						0		x	1	1
Robert de Bruer						0		x	1	1
John Huberd						0		x	1	1
Nicholas de Stallis						0	x		1	1
Peter de Benham						0	x		1	1
Alexander de Stallis						0	x		1	1
John Robechild						0	x		1	1
Ralph Druval						0	x		1	1
Total	12	12	12	12	12	60	12	12	24	84

⁹⁵¹ TNA C132/31/1.

Table 49 Bunsty Jurors: Frequency of Service

Juror	1241	1247	1262	1272	1286	Total eyres	1274	1279	Total HR	Total
William of Abington			x	x	x	3	x	x	2	5
William of Ravenstone	x	x	Elec	Elec		4			0	4
William son of Humphrey		x	x	Elec		3			0	3
William de Dudinton		x	x	x		3			0	3
John fitzJohn of Hanslope	x		Elec			2	x		1	3
William Lupus		x			x	2		x	1	3
Adam Franklyn			x	x		2		x	1	3
Richard de Thickethorn			x	x		2		x	1	3
Stephen Thebaud				x	x	2	x		1	3
Aymer de Noers	Elec	x				2			0	2
Simon of Ravenstone	Elec	Elec				2			0	2
Humphrey Visdelou	x	Elec				2			0	2
Roger Baiun	x	x				2			0	2
Walter of Haversham	x		x			2			0	2
John Dispensator			x	x		2			0	2
Simon son of Walter				x		1	x		1	2
Roger de Morewell					x	1		x	1	2
Roger of Birchmore					x	1		x	1	2
John de Morewell						0	x	x	2	2
Lucas de Comumero	x					1			0	1
Giffard of Tyringham	x					1			0	1
John de Haregrave	x					1			0	1
William le Frances of Hanslope	x					1			0	1
John Passelewe	x					1			0	1
William de Yxewell		x				1			0	1
Richard Baiun		x				1			0	1
Robert le Eyre of Bradfield		x				1			0	1
Philip of Lavendon		x				1			0	1
Robert of Abington			x			1			0	1
Thomas de Baregno			x			1			0	1
Thomas Baguy				x		1			0	1
John of Tathall			x			1			0	1
Philip Delaube			x			1			0	1
John Gosce of Stoke				x		1			0	1
Henry Prat of Weston				x		1			0	1
William de Noers					Elec	1			0	1
Miles of Hastings					Elec	1			0	1
William Mortimer					x	1			0	1
Ralph of Tathall					x	1			0	1
Thomas Chamberlain					x	1			0	1
John de Luvente					x	1			0	1
John de Beauchamp					x	1			0	1
Adam de Fortho					x	1			0	1
Fulk of Rycote						0	x		1	1
Geoffrey le Gois						0	x		1	1
John Harlewyn						0	x		1	1
William le Jevene						0	x		1	1
Richard de la Huse						0	x		1	1
William de Bereford						0	x		1	1
Adam Meriet						0	x		1	1
Henry Wynegos						0		x	1	1
William of Bottlisford						0		x	1	1
Simon of Woughton						0		x	1	1
Robert of Crofton						0		x	1	1
John son of Robert						0		x	1	1
Ralph Trice						0		x	1	1
Total	12	12	13	12	13	62	12	13	25	87

Aymer de Noers served in Bunsty in 1241 and 1247 and William de Noers in 1286. In 1286 William also served alongside his brother-in-law Miles of Hastings. Roger Baiun served in the same hundred in 1241 and 1247, and in 1247 he was joined by Richard Baiun. John of Tathall served in 1262, and Ralph of Tathall in 1286. John de Morewell (juror in 1274 and 1279) and Roger de Morewell (juror in 1279 and 1286) were brothers. Fulk of Rycote served in 1274, and his cousin Humphrey Visdelou had served in 1241 and 1247. Therefore, in both hundreds examples of more than one family member acting as a juror can be found and the lack of stable surnames means that this could be more pronounced.

Whilst this suggests that there was a hundredal ‘administrative class’ it does not necessarily prove that there was a hundredal community.⁹⁵² However, these were not the only tasks that men from these groups performed. In Langtree hundred, Richard Simeon only acted in an eyre in 1268, but was also a juror in 1265 and 1287 for the *IPMs* of the lords of Crowmarsh Gifford, the vill where he held his virgate of land.⁹⁵³ The 1268 eyre was the one eyre in this sample upon which William de Wyk did not serve, but he served on both of these inquisitions alongside Richard. Thomas Cornur was on the 1265 *IPM* jury, as well as serving in the 1268 eyre with Richard. Moreover, Alexander and Stephen de Stallis, William Morin and William Gerard all served on one of these *IPM* juries with Richard, as well as acting in at least one eyre or Hundred Roll inquiry.

Gilbert Chalcore held his one virgate in Goring, Langtree. He appears in a collection of Goring charters twenty-eight times.⁹⁵⁴ On all but two of those occasions at least one other man who had acted as a juror on one of the seven Langtree panels also appeared.

⁹⁵² Hunnisett, *Coroner*, 170-88.

⁹⁵³ TNA C132/31/1; C133/47/2.

⁹⁵⁴ This is a collection of charters in the Bodleian Library, from 12th-16th century. They are especially, but not exclusively, concerning land accumulated by the Lovedays. *Goring Charters*, xi-xii.

Most frequently (nineteen times), Gilbert appeared alongside Walter le Waleys, who also held in Goring. The two also appeared alongside each other in a Checkendon charter.⁹⁵⁵ This has barely touched upon the vast amount of administrative responsibilities that needed to be fulfilled, let alone social or tenurial networks, but it begins to give the impression of regular contact between at least some of these men.

In Blackburn the regularity of service on eyre juries cannot be assessed, but some sense of jurors' wider networks can be established. The *Pakenham Cartulary*, collated in the early fourteenth century, brings together charters relating to William of Pakenham's manor of Ixworth Thorpe in Blackburn. The focus of the *Pakenham Cartulary* on one manor and one lordly family not only provides evidence of interactions, but also gives some indication of whether these were sustained and frequent.⁹⁵⁶

Fourteen of the twenty-four Blackburn jurors appear in the *Pakenham Cartulary* at least once and 124 charters from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century contain at least one of the jurors as a witness. Eighty-one of these contain more than one of the jurors. Church identified the juror Ralph of Bardwell as the most frequent witness in the cartulary, though in fact two of the sixty-three charters bearing his name should be attributed to his uncle of the same name.⁹⁵⁷ On each of the sixty-one occasions that the younger Ralph of Bardwell appears, he is joined in the witness list by at least one of his

⁹⁵⁵ Boarstall, 39.

⁹⁵⁶ Historians have questioned whether witnesses were present at the transaction, but Broun has forcefully argued that they were: D. Broun, 'The presence of witnesses and the writing of charters' in *The Reality behind Charter Diplomacy in Anglo-Norman Britain*, ed. D. Broun (Glasgow, 2011), 235-90. See also: Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', 368-9.

⁹⁵⁷ *Pakenham*, 14. A case brought before the 1286-7 eyre records that Ralph of Bardwell's lands had passed through the hands of his three uncles, William, John and Ralph, before coming to his father Henry: TNA JUST1/826, m20. Ralph and his father both used the alias 'del Bek', and an *IPM* of 1264 records that Ralph son of Henry del Bek was underage: *CIPM*, i, 582. As Ralph was underage in 1264, the two earliest charters where his name appears (42 and 65) must refer to his uncle Ralph.

fellow 1286-7 jurors. A total of sixty-five men attested alongside Ralph, and whilst thirty-one of them appear only once, there was a core group of people who regularly witnessed with him. Six men appeared in more than twenty charters with him, three of whom were also jurors in 1286-7. The juror Robert ultra aquam attested alongside Ralph on forty-three occasions (Table 50).

Table 50 Blackburn Jurors as witnesses in the Pakenham Cartulary

Juror	No. of Attestations	Witnessing with another juror	Witnessing with Ralph of Bardwell
Ralph of Bardwell	61	61	-
Robert ultra aquam	62	55	43
John son of William of Bardwell	58	50	40
William of Thelnetham	55	50	39
Richard de Suthenton	19	19	15
Robert de Blakeberwe	19	18	14
Matthew of Thelnetham	13	6	1
Reginald Peché	10	9	7
Geoffrey Marshall	9	9	4
Bartholomew of Livermere	6	2	2
Robert the Engineer	3	3	2
Roger of Walsham	1	1	1
Ralph Ward of Weston	1	1	1
William of Langham	1	0	0
Total	318	284	169

There were many jurors who did not witness charters in the *Pakenham Cartulary*, so this cannot be used as evidence that all of them formed an active community. However, particularly the top six men in Table 50 do seem to have formed a distinctive group. Occasions where two or more of the jurors appear together can be multiplied. Ralph of Bardwell along with William of Thelnetham and four of the other 1286-7 jurors (Reginald Peché, Robert the Engineer, John of Hunston and Matthew of Thelnetham) witnessed an oath by Hervey son of Nicholas of Stanton in the 1290s.⁹⁵⁸ When Ralph of Bardwell made a grant to Berard of Wattisfield and his wife, Ralph le Ward of Weston and Robert the Engineer were two of the witnesses. Geoffrey of Stanton was another

⁹⁵⁸ *Stanton Charters*, 55A.

witness, and he served alongside Ralph on an *IPM* jury of 1299.⁹⁵⁹ In addition to Ralph, another four of the men who served on this 1299 *IPM* jury had already served together in 1286-7 (John son of William of Bardwell, Bartholomew of Livermere, William of Langham and William de Botinhale).⁹⁶⁰ This is particularly significant considering the gap of over twelve years between the two occasions. Ralph also witnessed a grant of Geoffrey of Stanton in 1277.⁹⁶¹ Edmund Despenser of Bardwell was another member of the 1299 jury, and he also witnessed two charters alongside Ralph of Bardwell, John son of William of Bardwell and Robert ultra aquam.⁹⁶² In the late thirteenth century, William of Thelnetham witnessed four charters with Robert the Engineer.⁹⁶³ In 1283-4, William of Thelnetham, John of Hunston, Reginald Peche and William de Botinhale served as jurors in the trial of the killers of William, rector of Woodhill in Bury St Edmunds.⁹⁶⁴ This shows that the same group of men served on inquests that fell within the jurisdiction of the liberty, as well as those which related to the king's government.

Witnessing charters together did not require a sense of community, but when so many of the same names repeatedly appear together, it does give the impression of an association between them. Certain jurors, like Ralph of Bardwell and Robert ultra aquam, appear repeatedly, but that is unsurprising because the collection of charters relates to Ixworth Thorpe, and both of these men held in the contiguous vill of Bardwell. In fact, the six jurors who attested most frequently in the *Pakenham Cartulary* all had their main holdings in vills contiguous to Ixworth Thorpe.⁹⁶⁵ This

⁹⁵⁹ *Stanton Charters*, 39.

⁹⁶⁰ TNA C133/89/8.

⁹⁶¹ *Stanton Charters*, 31.

⁹⁶² *Stanton Charters*, 24, 75.

⁹⁶³ *Stanton Charters*, 23, 26, 34, 35.

⁹⁶⁴ *The Letter-Book of William of Hoo: Sacrist of Bury St Edmunds, 1280-1294*, ed. A. Gransden (Ipswich, 1963), 134.

⁹⁶⁵ Ralph of Bardwell, Robert ultra aquam, Richard de Suthenton in Bardwell; John son of William of Bardwell in Bardwell and Sapiston; William of Thelnetham in Troston; and Robert Blakeberwe in Ixworth.

shows that when it came to witnessing charters, location was important. These men were not of national importance, but were important in their locality. They interacted with other inhabitants of Blackbourn hundred, but the fact that contacts were most frequent amongst those who lived in close proximity to each other brings the importance of the hundred as a focus for community into question: on a regular basis, local contacts were deemed more important.⁹⁶⁶

Interacting for administrative reasons did not mean that these men always served the same interests. In 1287, Ralph of Bardwell claimed the advowson of Hunston church against the prior of Ixworth. Four knights, including Edmund de Hemegrave who held land in Barningham from Ralph, were summoned to elect a jury that included William of Pakenham, the man whose charters Ralph and his family had regularly witnessed, and Roger of Walsham who served on the 1286-7 jury with Ralph. Although Ralph was associated with three of the men on the jury, he lost the case and was amerced.⁹⁶⁷ This negative result did not affect Ralph's relationship with William of Pakenham, as he continued to witness his charters after this date.

The hundred was one community to which these men belonged, and some of them were more established members than others; often more local concerns could take priority, just as wider interests could override hundred boundaries. The jurors who appear most frequently in other sources tend to be those with the most land, suggesting that it was the wealthier men who were more established in these wider groups. This in turn suggests that the poorest peasants would have been less likely to be well connected within their hundreds. However, this distinction may be illusory. The jurors would have

⁹⁶⁶ *Pakenham*, 18.

⁹⁶⁷ TNA JUST1/826, m20.

been forced to interact with wider groups of people in order to provide accurate information to an inquest, whether it was about a specific incident or more generally about landholding or crime within their hundred. At the eyres the twelve jurors were accompanied by representatives of each vill or tithing group, who invariably would have been less substantial men. It is probably true to say that the more substantial free men had a greater involvement in the wider hundred and beyond, but a clear dividing line cannot be drawn, because the same administrative processes that brought men together within the hundred also drew on smaller groups within vills, and wider groups like the shire.

3.4 Beyond the hundred

When privileges or liberties were granted over groups of hundreds or other areas, the significance of hundred boundaries could be undermined. Even in regions where no such liberties had been granted, hundreds were thoroughly integrated into the shire and the rest of the realm: they were not insular units.

3.4.1 Private Honours and Liberties

The influence of private liberties would have been particularly pronounced in two of the case studies: Blackbourn double-hundred, which fell entirely within the liberty of St Edmunds; and Langtree hundred, that fell substantially within the honour of Wallingford. How far these administrative groupings encouraged a sense of community, and how far they overrode other associations with hundred or shire will be assessed.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁸ For franchises, see: Cam, 'Evolution', 427-42; N. Hurnard, 'The Anglo-Norman Franchises', *EHR*, 64 (1949), 289-327. For liberties' courts, see: Palmer, *County*, 263-81; *OHLE*, 285-9, 295-6, 556-61, 562-5. For honours, see: F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1961), 57-65; P. Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised', *P&P*, 125 (1989), 43-5; D. Crouch, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised', *P&P*, 131 (1991), 167-8, 172-5; Crouch, *English*, 146-50, 166-76; D. Carpenter, 'The Second Century of English Feudalism', *P&P*, 168 (2000), 34-7, 40-7.

The Liberty of St Edmunds

The liberty of St Edmunds consisted of Blackbourn double-hundred, Babergh double-hundred, Cosford half-hundred, and the hundreds of Thingoe, Thedwastrey, Lackford and Risbridge. Its origin as a grouping is uncertain, but it may have been as a gift to Queen Emma upon her marriage, either to Æthelred in 1002 or to Cnut in 1017.⁹⁶⁹ Emma was dispossessed of the liberty in 1043 by her son Edward, who then granted it to St Edmunds ‘with sake and soke’ over the eight and a half hundreds.⁹⁷⁰

The *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson provides the clearest breakdown of the dues perquisite to the abbey: they ‘are the rights and financial dues which would have belonged to the king if King Edward the Confessor had not given them to St. Edmund.’⁹⁷¹ These rights and privileges also came with obligations. The king’s sheriff could not enter the liberty, and the abbot held his own courts; this meant that he had to maintain peace and ensure that justice was done.⁹⁷² The rights would have needed to be constantly redefined and reconsidered due to governmental development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁹⁷³

The rights held by St Edmunds were amongst the most extensive enjoyed by a liberty holder. Coupled with his tenurial rights in the same region, the abbot’s dominance would have been manifest to all.⁹⁷⁴ St Edmunds’ influence could have made the liberty

⁹⁶⁹ Eaglen, *Abbey*, 24.

⁹⁷⁰ A 14th-century copy of the grant survives in the Werketone Register, BL Harl. MS 638, f26; for other versions see Sawyer, *AS Charters*, no. 1069, 319. Printed: *AS Writs*, no.9, 155.

⁹⁷¹ *Kalendar*, ix; Gransden, *Bury*, 30-1; Hurnard, ‘Anglo-Norman Franchises’, 310, 313-6, 319.

⁹⁷² Cam, ‘The king’s government’, 183-4, 191-2, 202-3; Cam, *Hundred*, 55; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 4; Butler, *Jocelin of Brakelond*, xxiv.

⁹⁷³ Cam, ‘Evolution’, 427-442, 434-5; Gransden, *Bury*, 236.

⁹⁷⁴ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 3-4, 16-7, 34.

a cohesive and coherent unit. It was treated as such for administration: for the 1274-5 Hundred Rolls inquiry the eight and a half hundreds provided one return rather than separate hundredal ones, and when the eyre came to Suffolk a separate session was held for the liberty at Cattishall. But the reality was more complex. Though a court for the liberty was held at Bury, each hundred still held separate hundred courts, and each presented separately at the eyre. Moreover, the abbot's tenurial interests were extensive but not all-encompassing. St Edmunds was not the only important landholder in Suffolk, and there was a complicated network of rights within the liberty. Most notably, the honours of Clare and Eye held widespread lands in Suffolk, and Clare in particular extended into the liberty. Any tenant of Clare or Eye living within the liberty would have had to acknowledge a complex web of obligations.⁹⁷⁵

The court of the liberty could have been an important focus for tenants, but as with the other courts considered above, attendance was not obligatory for every inhabitant. What is more, despite the abbot's extensive franchisal rights, he and his officials were still ultimately answerable to the king, and if justice was not administered properly appeal could be made outside of the liberty.

The administrative needs of both the king and the abbot drew upon the same groups of men, showing that there was no hard division between obligations to royal or private administration. William of Pakenham was a prominent knight in Suffolk. The majority of his lands were within Blackbourn hundred, but they also extended into other parts of the liberty. He enjoyed a good relationship with Bury and he served in various roles in the liberty's administration.⁹⁷⁶ This would suggest that he, and others of his status,

⁹⁷⁵ Cam, *Hundred*, 55-6, 206-9.

⁹⁷⁶ Pakenham, 1-4; Bailey, *Suffolk*, 12, 34-5.

would be firm members of a liberty community. However, he also served the administration of the diocese of Norwich, and the king's courts. He was called to act as one of twelve knights in a jury at the 1286-7 eyre and was one of the collectors of the lay subsidy.⁹⁷⁷ Moreover, as illustrated above, the majority of the men who witnessed his charters were drawn from the immediate area around his estates, suggesting that his most frequent interactions and closest associations were formed with local landholders, and contacts with those in the rest of the liberty would have been more intermittent. If a knight like William formed relationships within a relatively close perimeter of his main manors, despite holding lands in other hundreds and acting within the abbey's administration, it suggests that lesser men would have been even less likely to identify with the liberty specifically. The administration of the liberty and its courts would have provided opportunities for interaction, but the extent to which men followed up these connections depended upon proximity and choice. William's interests were both wider and narrower than the liberty: it provided the context in which to make connections, but did not necessarily define or limit them.

The Honour of Wallingford

Like the liberty of St Edmunds, the holder of the honour of Wallingford had extensive franchisal rights in addition to his tenorial ones. Unlike the liberty, the honour did not form a geographical unit. The lands and jurisdiction of the honour covered over 100 manors (including seven in Langtree) and extended into nine counties.⁹⁷⁸ The honour was formed out of the lands held by Miles Crispin in the early twelfth century, a substantial amount of which had been associated with Wigot of Wallingford before the

⁹⁷⁷ TNA JUST1/827. Bailey, *Suffolk*, 12. For other examples of men acting as both 'private and public' officials, see Dyer, *Making*, 150-1.

⁹⁷⁸ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 8.

Conquest.⁹⁷⁹ From 1154-1231 the honour was in the hands of the ruling king, except for the years 1189-95 when it was held by the future King John.⁹⁸⁰ In 1231, Henry III granted the honour to his brother, Richard earl of Cornwall; when he died in 1272 the honour passed to his son Edmund; and upon Edmund's death without heirs in 1300 the honour reverted to the crown.⁹⁸¹ Despite such long periods in the king's hand, the honour persisted as an administrative and jurisdictional unit.

The rights enjoyed by the lord of Wallingford are not clear in the early part of this period, but by the thirteenth century they are known to have been extensive. The lord and his officials exercised the rights and responsibilities of the sheriff across the honour and had jurisdiction over its tenants. The honorial tenants still attended the general eyre, but in some counties a separate session was held, and it is likely that Richard and Edmund received the financial profits.⁹⁸²

In 1244, Richard was also granted the manor of Benson, to which lordship of the four and a half Chiltern hundreds, including Langtree, pertained.⁹⁸³ Already the dominant lord in southern Oxfordshire, this cemented Richard's position and meant that the whole of Langtree hundred, whether or not it was pertinent to the honour, was answerable to Richard. Nonetheless, the Chiltern hundreds were still treated separately to the honour in surviving accounts.⁹⁸⁴ Though Richard's dominance in the area was bolstered, it did not entirely override existing administrative structures.

⁹⁷⁹ Above, 49-51, 73-4; Tilley, 'Wallingford', 75.

⁹⁸⁰ Stenton, *First Century*, 57-8; Tilley, 'Wallingford', 88.

⁹⁸¹ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 11; Sanders, *Baronies*, 93.

⁹⁸² Tilley, 'Wallingford', 135, 149-55, 159-60.

⁹⁸³ *VCH Oxfordshire*, i, 374.

⁹⁸⁴ For example: *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall*, 102-3, 126.

The tenants of the honour of Wallingford would have been obliged to attend an honorial court rather than the hundred court.⁹⁸⁵ The more substantial tenants of the honour of Wallingford would have been called upon to act as the lord's officials and to be involved in the administration. Sometimes they would have needed to form juries to represent the honour in a legal case, as in 1184 when knights of Oxfordshire, clerks of the archdeaconry of Oxford and knights of the honour of Wallingford were all called upon for a case regarding Watlington and Mongewell churches.⁹⁸⁶ However, these same men also acted in the royal administration, and many of Wallingford's tenants acted as eyre jurors, for example John de Chaussy for Langtree in 1285. Fulk of Rycote acted as a juror for Bunsty hundred during the 1274-5 Hundred Rolls inquiry, but he was also a prominent knight of Wallingford, holding his Rycote manor in Oxfordshire from the honour. Fulk acted as steward of the honour, but he also acted as sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and, like his father before him, had been coroner in Oxfordshire. He was also one of the commissioners for the 1279-80 Hundred Rolls inquiry in Oxfordshire, and acted on grand assize juries for the county. Fulk may have had wider interests than some of the other Wallingford knights, but other tenants of the honour also seem to have moved between the honorial and royal administration with ease.⁹⁸⁷

Though the records for the honour court do not survive, we do have some evidence of honorial gatherings, and it has been shown using charter witness lists that there were regular opportunities for the knightly tenants of the honour to come together.⁹⁸⁸ But, as in the liberty of St Edmunds, such opportunities did not only arise in the context of the honour. Even for those tenants who did just hold from the honour of Wallingford, it was not necessarily their sole focus. As Coss argued, even in the heyday of honorial

⁹⁸⁵ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 162, 166, 168-9. See also: Harvey, *Cuxham*, 147.

⁹⁸⁶ *Oseney Abbey*, iv, 415-6.

⁹⁸⁷ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 254-5, 267-8, 271, 272-4.

⁹⁸⁸ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 286-7, 313.

communities, it is unlikely that they were self-contained.⁹⁸⁹ Tilley's study of the tenants of Wallingford concluded tentatively that there was an honorial community, but he argued that the 'community' was not insular, and nor was it the main focus for solidarity.⁹⁹⁰

3.4.2 A 'County Community'?

Palmer has argued that 'there would have been no county community were it not for the unifying action of the sheriff in the county court.'⁹⁹¹ The fact that the liberty of St Edmunds was 'effectively run as a separate county' and held a court equivalent to a county court at Bury would suggest that the tenants of Blackbourn had little association with the wider county.⁹⁹² The Oxfordshire county court claimed no suits at all from the southern part of the county as it was so dominated by the honour of Wallingford.⁹⁹³ Moreover, as the honour extended across county boundaries it may have further undermined the significance of the county.

The idea of the 'county community' has been most explored by early modernists, but medievalists have traced the origins of that community back into their own period.⁹⁹⁴ The concept was not new however, as Maitland had already made the observation that the county: 'is not a mere stretch of land, a governmental district; it is an organised body of men; it is a *communitas*'.⁹⁹⁵ However, Christine Carpenter has argued that the

⁹⁸⁹ Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism', 43-5. See also: Crouch and Carpenter, 'Bastard Feudalism', 167, 171, 180-1, 185-7; P. Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised: Reply', *P&P*, 131 (1991), 199; Carpenter, 'Second Century', 47.

⁹⁹⁰ Tilley, 'Wallingford', 290-309, 312-3, 337.

⁹⁹¹ Palmer, *County*, 296.

⁹⁹² Bailey, *Suffolk*, 3-4.

⁹⁹³ Palmer, *County*, 76.

⁹⁹⁴ For a summary see: C. Holmes, 'The County Community in Stuart Historiography', *JBS*, 19, 2 (1980), 54-73; Maddicott, 'County Community'. See also: Crouch, *English*, 14.

⁹⁹⁵ Pollock and Maitland, *English Law*, i, 534.

existence of a 'county community' in either the medieval or early modern periods remains unproven.⁹⁹⁶

In the thirteenth century, county courts met once a month, and Cam has argued that they probably met that frequently during the Anglo-Saxon period as well; conversely, Palmer believes that they only met regularly twice a year before the Conquest, and that most local business would have been taken care of at hundred courts.⁹⁹⁷ During the reign of Henry I there were complaints that they were being held too frequently, and Magna Carta specified that they were to be held no more than once a month, with a few customary exceptions.⁹⁹⁸ County courts relied on the presence of suitors to function, and the obligation to attend was a responsibility of tenure that could be owed by great barons and smallholders alike.⁹⁹⁹ The number of suits owed to most county courts declined across the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, probably because of the jurisdiction of liberties.¹⁰⁰⁰ Often suitors were only obliged to attend twice a year at the major sessions, and very few were expected to attend every court. Palmer has concluded that by the end of the thirteenth century, at most county court sessions sheriffs could have enforced the attendance of no more than twenty-four suitors.¹⁰⁰¹ This would suggest that the county courts could have only a limited role in encouraging the development of county-based relationships. However, this does not include those involved in litigation or attending for social and business reasons.¹⁰⁰²

⁹⁹⁶ Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', 374-5, 380.

⁹⁹⁷ Cam, *Hundred*, 10; Palmer, *County*, 3-4; See also: *OHLE*, 276-80, 550-4; Morris, *Sheriff*, 193.

⁹⁹⁸ Palmer, *County*, 4.

⁹⁹⁹ Morris, *Sheriff*, 193; Coss, *Origins*, 33.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Palmer, *County*, 80; Cam, *Hundred*, 109-11.

¹⁰⁰¹ Palmer, *County*, 81. By contrast, Maddicott has argued that most county courts from the 13th-15th centuries would have been attended by at least 150 men: Maddicott, 'County Community', 30. Coss is unconvinced by Maddicott's arguments: Coss, *Origins*, 121.

¹⁰⁰² Maddicott, 'County Community', 30-1.

County courts could be a focus for the development of a community and a shared identity, but they were undermined by the loss of suitors to other courts and the infrequency of attendance of many suitors. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that suit of court was not the only way in which a county identity could be nurtured. Like the manor, vill and hundred the county was a regularly utilised administrative unit, and as with these smaller groupings it is possible that this encouraged people to identify with their county. It has been shown above that the tenants of Bury's liberty and the honour of Wallingford could be called upon to act for their county in an administrative capacity. The county and its administrators formed the link between the locality and the centre. People who wanted to bring a case before the king's justices without travelling to Westminster would wait for the eyre to visit their county; inquiries like the Hundred Rolls were carried out on a county by county basis; the sheriff was responsible for collecting royal revenues and fines for the entire county.

However, administrative coherence did not automatically generate a community, and the size of the counties means that for the majority of people the administrative function of the community would not have been reinforced by regular interaction.¹⁰⁰³ Moreton has suggested that the concept of a 'county community' would be better replaced by the idea of a 'county of communities' to acknowledge the fact that the county itself was often not the main focus for the formation of relationships.¹⁰⁰⁴

3.4.3 Other Associations

The units of association that have been considered above, from the family to administrative groupings like the manor, hundred, honour or shire, formed frameworks

¹⁰⁰³ People may have been more likely to attend court sessions closest to their homes, as Holmes has shown for the seventeenth century: Holmes, 'County Community', 61.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Moreton, 'A Social Gulf', 261.

within which relationships could be formed and interactions were encouraged. However, some associations cannot be placed neatly within these boundaries.

Landholding

Domesday Book shows that both before and after the Norman Conquest, the holdings of the greatest men were widespread, and often crossed the boundaries of hundreds and shires. Though the lands of lesser men were generally more compact, they were not necessarily confined by administrative boundaries. Burgræd, thegn, held land and had commended men in Bunsty *TRE*. In Buckinghamshire his status seems relatively insignificant, but his influence extended north-east into Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. A further forty-one men holding over thirty-seven hides in Bedfordshire and twenty-one men with over sixteen hides in Northamptonshire were commended to Burgræd highlighting how a localised network did not necessarily mean one that was contained by county boundaries; Burgræd's network of lordship was instead grouped around the shared boundaries of three counties. All of Burgræd's lands and commended men in Bedfordshire were within the hundreds of Stodden and Willey; in Buckinghamshire all of his lands and commended men were within Bunsty; and within Northamptonshire, though his own lands were spread more widely, all of his commended men held in Higham hundred. Abels has suggested that a craving for influence within the hundred, and crucially within the hundred court, had led Burgræd to cultivate these hundredal networks of landholding and lordship.¹⁰⁰⁵ In doing so, he focused on four hundreds in close proximity to each other, but was unrestrained by county boundaries.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Abels, 'Sheriffs', 31.

Men and women were similarly unrestrained by county boundaries in their landholding across the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As in Domesday, this was inevitably more pronounced amongst the more substantial landholders, but was also a possibility for lesser men. A case brought before the 1248 Berkshire eyre involved a dispute between Alexander son of Robert of Wallingford and Stephen de Stallis (a Langtree juror in 1247), over one acre of land and 4d rents in Wallingford, Berkshire, and Newnham Murren, Oxfordshire.¹⁰⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the majority of the inhabitants in each of the case studies had just one holding, so their lands would have fallen within the boundaries of just one vill, hundred and county by default.

Rights of Common

When a vill contained more than one manor some agreement would have to be reached over shared rights of common because they could not easily be managed by one manorial court. Dyer has suggested that vill communities would be united by a desire to prevent others from encroaching on their commons,¹⁰⁰⁷ but sometimes these rights could also be shared by inhabitants of different vills.¹⁰⁰⁸

In the 1220s, Geoffrey Marmion and William Basset made an agreement to share common meadow between Little Stoke and Ipsden, both in Langtree hundred, though by c.1230 the lord in each place quitclaimed his rights in the other's meadow.¹⁰⁰⁹ South Stoke was in Dorchester hundred, but part of the common lands in Stoke fell within neighbouring Goring in Langtree hundred.¹⁰¹⁰ In Blackbourn hundred, the heathland

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Berkshire Eyre*, 444.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Dyer, 'Medieval Village Community', 419.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 45; Harvey, *Cuxham*, 99-102.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Boarstall*, 34, 35.

¹⁰¹⁰ *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford, 1907-1908), i, xlv, 125; *VCH Cambridgeshire*, vii, 93-112.

between Troston and Honington was intercommoned by both vills, as was the land between Barnham and Thetford, though Thetford was in Norfolk.¹⁰¹¹ The tendency for vills to have defined boundaries lessened as one moved from the 'central' to the 'peripheral' Breckland vills, partially because they lay closer together, and in Fornham St Genevieve and St Martin, Great Barton, Ampton and Timworth, all Thedwastry hundred, and Culford and Ingham Blackbourn hundred, 'there was an uninterrupted maze of open-fields and pastures which crossed village boundaries freely'.¹⁰¹² When the layout of the land in these places is considered, the sharing of resources is perfectly understandable. But the fact that these rights crossed manorial, vill, hundred and even county boundaries illustrates just how insignificant these administrative boundaries could be. Agricultural necessity and geography dictated arrangements that were made, not the administrative units.

Towns, markets and trade

Many external influences could impact upon the development of a community. A particularly important factor during this period was the growth of towns.¹⁰¹³ The increasing importance of a nearby town could bring an influx of people to the area and encourage growth in production, but alternatively it could strangle the development of local markets and encourage population movement from rural to urban centres.¹⁰¹⁴

Miller and Hatcher emphasised the importance of markets and trade to the peasantry as much as to their superiors.¹⁰¹⁵ Proximity to towns may have discouraged the peasantry

¹⁰¹¹ Bailey, *Marginal*, 81.

¹⁰¹² Bailey, *Marginal*, 44.

¹⁰¹³ Britnell, 'Commercialization'; Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 149-155, 395-6; Dyer, *Making*, 187-227. For peasant engagement with markets see: Schofield, *Peasant*, 131-56.

¹⁰¹⁴ Dyer, *Making*, 194-6.

¹⁰¹⁵ Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 142.

from wider travel, enabling them to fulfil their market needs within their own locality. Richer groups were more likely to seek out luxury goods which required longer distance travel to London and other large towns, but most items required by a peasant could be found in local markets.¹⁰¹⁶ For the inhabitants of Langtree, Wallingford on the opposite banks of the Thames would have been an important centre, though it was not a town of national importance. Throughout the thirteenth century and beyond, Henley-on-Thames grew in significance, particularly because of its important role in providing grain for London.¹⁰¹⁷ This would have provided another significant market centre near Langtree hundred, but it may have actually stifled opportunities for river bound trade further up the Thames via Langtree; certainly, Henley overtook Wallingford as the principal market on the middle and upper Thames by the mid-thirteenth century, and the Thames beyond Henley as a route for water bound trade decreased in importance from this point.¹⁰¹⁸

A lack of navigable waterways could stifle the growth of trade. Olney, Buckinghamshire, was the only 'borough' within the case studies, but it did not achieve great size or status at any point.¹⁰¹⁹ It was previously thought that the Great Ouse was navigable as far as Olney, but this conclusion has been brought into doubt, and it seems unlikely that this section of river was navigable at any point in this period.¹⁰²⁰ Olney's position on the Great Ouse was used for fishing and milling, instead of facilitating trade.

¹⁰¹⁶ Dyer, 'The Consumer', 316, 319-20; Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 153-4; Schofield, *Peasant*, 148-9.

¹⁰¹⁷ S. Letters, *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales* (London, 2003), ii, 282; VCH *Oxfordshire*, xvi, 6; E.T. Jones, 'River Navigation in Medieval England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26, 1 (2000), 61.

¹⁰¹⁸ Letters, *Gazetteer*, ii, 82;

¹⁰¹⁹ Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 279-90.

¹⁰²⁰ Jones, 'River Navigation', 67.

Much trade would probably have occurred at small, local markets.¹⁰²¹ It is difficult to assess how many markets existed at any one time, as a grant of a market by the king did not necessarily mark its inception. Moreover, some grants of markets and fairs may have been unsuccessful.¹⁰²² A market at Olney, Bunsty, was in existence before it was first mentioned in the records in 1223.¹⁰²³ Markets were granted at Lavendon in 1249 and Hanslope in 1292 (Bunsty); in Whitchurch in 1245 (Langtree); and in Market Weston in 1263 and Ixworth in 1384 (Blackbourn).¹⁰²⁴ Considering the size of Blackbourn in relation to the other case studies, the lack of official markets there is particularly striking, especially as Suffolk more generally was densely populated by markets.¹⁰²⁵ It has been suggested that the abbot of Bury St Edmunds stifled the development of any markets in the liberty that would affect the dominance of Bury itself, and other regional markets under his control.¹⁰²⁶ Even so, most inhabitants would have been within relatively short distance of a market, 'which must have encouraged commercialisation and streamlined local trade.'¹⁰²⁷

Access to markets would have been imperative in enabling peasant independence, so the relative proximity to established markets would have affected how insular communities were, and how widely peasants travelled on a regular basis. The rapid increase in official markets across the thirteenth century, coupled with an increase in the number and size of towns, suggests that as the thirteenth century progressed there would have been greater opportunities for the peasantry to fulfil their market needs within a closer radius of their home.

¹⁰²¹ Schofield, *Peasant*, 148-9.

¹⁰²² Smith, 'Periodic Market', 462-3; Miller and Hatcher, *Towns, Commerce*, 155, 159-61, 176-80.

¹⁰²³ Letters, *Gazetteer*, i, 65, 67.

¹⁰²⁴ Letters, *Gazetteer*, i, 62, 63, 70, 71; ii, 285, 330, 333.

¹⁰²⁵ Smith, 'Periodic Market', 456-60.

¹⁰²⁶ Smith, 'Periodic Market', 458-60.

¹⁰²⁷ Bailey, *Marginal*, 144.

National Awareness

Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the intrusiveness of the government increased, forcing people to have a wider awareness.¹⁰²⁸ Appeals to statutes suggest that people paid attention to the information that was filtered from the centre to the localities. The Statute of Marlborough (1267) following the Provisions of Westminster (1259), had stated that *beaupleder*, a fine levied on suitors in advance of any mistakes they may make in their judgements, should not be taken.¹⁰²⁹ When Ely's sokemen in Swaffham Prior, Staine, complained in 1279 that *beaupleder* was still being exacted, they were aware that it was *contra statuta domini regis*.¹⁰³⁰ At the 1261 Cambridgeshire eyre, the vill of Bottisham, Staine was amerced for burying a body before it had been viewed by the coroner.¹⁰³¹ The vill responded that a writ of the king issued during a period of famine had stated that a body could be buried without the coroner, if there was no suspicion of felony. The enrolment of this writ in the Close Rolls refers only to Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, so the claim made by this vill shows that it also went to Cambridgeshire, or at the very least was known and considered to have application there.¹⁰³²

These examples do not prove that all peasants were aware of and understood all legislation issued by the government, and it is not clear who in these localities was making these appeals. It seems likely that certain individuals were more knowledgeable of such things than others, but it should not be presumed that the rest of the population

¹⁰²⁸ For peasant engagement in politics and national issues see: Schofield, *Peasant*, 157-85.

¹⁰²⁹ *The Statutes of the Realm*, ed. A. Luders, i, 1235-77, 22-3; *Documents of the baronial movement of reform and rebellion, 1258-1267*, eds. R.E. Treharne and I.J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973), 143-4; D. Carpenter, 'English Peasants in Politics, 1258-1267', *P&P*, 136 (1992), 26-8.

¹⁰³⁰ *RH*, ii, 485a; i, 37b-38a.

¹⁰³¹ TNA JUST1/82, m26.

¹⁰³² *CCR*, 1256-9, 212. See also Hunnisett, *Coroner*, 9.

were ignorant.¹⁰³³ In times of civil war, national politics could come devastatingly close for the peasantry, as discussed in the context of Stephen's and John's reigns above.¹⁰³⁴ Moreover, it is possible that the peasantry were more than just bystanders in these conflicts. David Carpenter has suggested that peasants could also engage with politics and identify with a national cause.¹⁰³⁵ Thus, John Wapurnet of Swaffham, Staine hundred, was able to declare that he was 'on the side of the barons' during the civil war of Henry III's reign, despite, or perhaps because, most of the lords of Swaffham were known royalists. Peasants could feel like they were part of the 'realm' and that the barons were acting in their interests.¹⁰³⁶

Even relatively lowly peasants were expected to fulfil administrative roles in their manors, vills or hundreds. These obligations not only brought them into contact with higher status individuals, but also encouraged familiarity with structures, legislation and ideas that were filtered down from the centre to the locality. These smaller units of administration and association did not mark the limits of the peasantry's horizons, but could instead help to provide them with a wider awareness of systems of government, and provide connections to the rest of the realm and central government.

Proximity and convenience

Instances where people worked outside of administrative boundaries do not necessarily disprove their importance. However, in most of the discussion above it has been clear that one factor could, time after time, override these boundaries: proximity. People were expected to represent their vills, hundreds and counties during inquests, and to attend

¹⁰³³ D. Klerman, 'Settlement and the Decline of Private Prosecution in Thirteenth-Century England', *Law and History Review*, 19, 1 (2001), 50; Schofield, *Peasant*, 175-9.

¹⁰³⁴ Above, 93-5. See also Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, ix-x; Schofield, *Peasant*, 170-1.

¹⁰³⁵ Carpenter, 'Peasants in Politics', 3-42. See also: Schofield, *Peasant*, 157-85.

¹⁰³⁶ Carpenter, 'Peasants in Politics', 3. See also: Harvey, *Cuxham*, 111-2.

their courts. This could encourage a sense of community to develop, but did not dictate all of their choices, many of which would have centred on convenience. The inhabitants of Langtree hundred would have visited Wallingford just across the border in Berkshire, rather than the county town of Oxford. Peasants and lords in Langtree and Blackbourn shared rights of common across vill, hundred and county boundaries rather than respecting these artificial divisions. William of Pakenham associated most frequently with the men living in neighbouring vills, rather than drawing upon associations across the entire hundred, liberty or county. Equally, men and women could draw on wider connections when necessary and were not confined by boundaries when they did so. Hundred and county administration provided the context for people to interact and thus could encourage associations of interest within administrative boundaries, but they could not dictate the choices that people made.

3.5 Conclusion

All of the groups and units discussed above overlapped with other administrative structures and loyalties. When the structure of society is considered, it is easy to see why none of these communities could ever be exclusive: a manor was part of a vill or vills, and part of a wider lordship; the vill was an integral part of the hundred, which in turn was an integral part of the county and realm. Considering each in isolation underemphasises this overlap, and ends up prioritising one over another. Emphasising the importance of a vill or manorial community, does not necessarily detract from the vitality of a hundredal, county or kingdom-wide community, but each could co-exist and develop in its own way.

What has emerged strongly is the importance of proximity and geography in the choices that people made. The vill and the manor were probably the most ubiquitous community for the peasantry, but even men of greater importance often formed relationships within their immediate area. Just as William of Pakenham's charters were mostly witnessed by men of slightly lower rank who lived in the immediate vicinity of his main manors, Moreton has emphasised how the gentry could never have lived as a self-contained class. For economic and social reasons, the gentry often relied upon men of lesser status within their own localities, rather than exclusively forming relationships with men of the same status over a wider area.¹⁰³⁷ The administrative structures that defined the groups of men who acted together as administrators, brought people together in courts and were the units for financial assessments and inquiries, were vitally important to the functioning of medieval society. Nonetheless, if discussion is limited to these units a one dimensional view will emerge. People's choices were influenced by personality, convenience and opportunity, as much as they were by administrative unity and landholding structures. Moreover, though horizontal ties were important, vertical ties of lordship were far from negligible during this period.

Associations that were purely social must also be acknowledged, but there was no reason for information about the routine social life of the population to be recorded. The existence of the tavern in Little Wilbraham, Staine, is only known because it was the site of two fatal fights recorded in the 1272 eyre roll.¹⁰³⁸ Gathering together to eat and drink was a common and integral part of many communal activities, and one that would not have been recorded in the assiduous way that court appearances or communal fines were.¹⁰³⁹ From the lowliest peasants to the greatest barons, none of the inhabitants of

¹⁰³⁷ Moreton, 'A Social Gulf', 259-61.

¹⁰³⁸ TNA JUST1/85 m4.

¹⁰³⁹ Clark, *English Alehouse*, 14, 20, 23-4.

England during this period lived entirely isolated lives and all were active participants in some capacity, whether in local policing or manorial matters, or in wider concerns.¹⁰⁴⁰ People regularly worked within these administrative boundaries, but they regularly associated outside of them too, and so any communities formed must have been fluid.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Hilton, *English Peasantry*, 15.

Conclusion

The two centuries after Domesday are characterised as a period of extensive change. Henry II's legal reforms brought the king's justice to a wider sector of society than ever before, and drew an increasing number of people into the administration. During this period slavery died out in England, but the distinction between free and unfree amongst the peasantry was crystallised in the laws of villeinage. The population was rapidly increasing, and by the end of the thirteenth century the country was teetering on the edge of a subsistence crisis. There was extensive subinfeudation and manorial fragmentation; there were more manorial lords, and even the lowliest aspired to trappings of status and the control of space and people that lordship involved.

These developments did not have an evenly distributed impact however, and they were not experienced in the same way by everyone. The recorded population of Langtree hundred increased by a negligible amount between 1086 and 1279-80, and though there were probably unrecorded lessees, it seems unlikely that there were substantially more people in this hundred in the late thirteenth century than there had been in the late eleventh. There had been extensive subinfeudation: Edmund of Cornwall held no demesne lands, whilst Miles Crispin had kept all of his land in Langtree in hand. But there had been very little manorial fragmentation. The Hundred Rolls portray a simplified version of Langtree society, but it seems clear that in terms of demography and tenurial structures, Langtree had developed differently to the other hundreds in this study, and to the prevailing presumptions in the literature.

Blackbourn double-hundred exhibited some of the features expected in East Anglian society. There was extensive fragmentation of landholdings, and many low status manorial lords. However, the dominance of Bury St Edmunds in this region and the

difficulties in farming the infertile Breckland region encouraged stronger manorial ties and more communal organisation than would be expected in Suffolk. In the High Suffolk part of the hundred, landholding was more dispersed and manorial structures more fluid, but even here the overwhelming dominance of free tenures which would be expected in Suffolk is not evident in the surviving records. By contrast, in Bunsty and in Langtree most of the tenant land was free, which would not be expected in Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire. Bunsty was in the fertile valley of the Great Ouse; though large, nucleated settlements were common in river valleys, settlement in Bunsty was dispersed, encouraged by the amount of woodland and facilitated by a good water supply. The fertile land, weaker manorial structures and extent of free land meant that a particularly high population increase could be accommodated in Bunsty; for similar reasons, dramatic population increase was also absorbed in Staine, Cambridgeshire. Langtree, Blackbourn, Bunsty and Staine developed in different ways between Domesday and the Hundred Rolls. The populations in each experienced different pressures, and differences in lordship, landscape and the communities themselves influenced how they were dealt with. This illustrates the importance of local studies and how they can contribute to making general narratives more nuanced. Moreover, the wealth of data gathered for each case study in the thirteenth century, shows the value of the Hundred Rolls, and illustrates how valuable further intensive study of this major source could be.

The Norman Conquest has traditionally been treated as a watershed moment in history. Studies tend to start or end with 1066, but more recently attempts have been made to cross the ‘fault-line of ‘1066’ that runs through English history’.¹⁰⁴¹ The existence of Domesday Book and limitations of other earlier evidence mean that this study started in

¹⁰⁴¹ J. Crick and E. van Houts, *A Social History of England, 900-1200* (Cambridge, 2011), 9.

1066 by necessity, and though this is artificial in some ways, it was shown that there was substantial change between 1066 and 1086, implying that the Norman Conquest did mark a break in these communities. Except for Abbot Baldwin in Blackbourn, the *TRE* lords and substantial landholders were effectively wiped out. Eadgifu wife of Wulfweard White suffered a dramatic drop in status: Eadgifu and her husband held substantial estates *TRE*, but by 1086 she was just a subtenant of the bishop of Coutances on the smallest, least valuable estate she had previously held. Nonetheless, she was one of the lucky ones. A few, like Engelric and Wigot in Langtree, survived for a period after the Conquest, but most were entirely dispossessed.

There is likely to have been much higher survival rates in the lower status groups, but unfortunately Domesday does not provide enough information to quantify this. In Blackbourn hundred, where *TRE* and *TRW* numbers for the peasantry are provided, there was continuity in numbers, but that does not mean that they survived unscathed. Many of the free men and sokemen held allodial lands before the Conquest, but by 1086 only two free men in the king's hand had not been added to the fee of a tenant-in-chief. Values had increased across Blackbourn and Langtree, indicating that the peasantry were under increased pressure from their new lords. Even though values decreased in Bunsty, this may have obscured continued or increased pressure in this hundred too. In Langtree and Bunsty where *TRE* numbers for the peasantry are not provided, it is possible that the *villani* and *bordarii* of 1086 included amongst their ranks some of the named landholders of 1066, who had suffered a reduction in status and been re-categorised as dependent peasants by 1086. Some pre-Conquest estates passed as a block to new tenants-in-chief, but there was also substantial reorganisation, which cannot have failed to impact upon the peasantry living and working on the land.

Personal and tenurial lordship had become more intimately connected, and a greater number of peasants had been brought within the manorial nexus.

It has been argued that the position of the peasantry was generally worsening across the two centuries after Domesday,¹⁰⁴² and the evidence presented here in many ways supports that view. The comparison of holding size in the late eleventh century and the late thirteenth century illustrated that in Staine, there was a much higher proportion of smallholders by 1279-80 than there had been in 1086. In Blackbourn a high proportion of the peasantry held a few acres or less, and even the unfree peasantry tended to have small, irregular holdings in the thirteenth century. The division between free and unfree was crystallised in law in the late twelfth century, and in each case study a substantial proportion of the population was holding unfreely in 1279-80. In some circumstances this may not have made a material difference to their lives, and the unfree would have been protected by custom to some degree. In Bunsty, Staine and the Blackbourn villis where it was possible to compare, there were generally a higher proportion of free smallholders than unfree smallholders. However, the evidence suggests that the unfree generally owed more than their free neighbours for their holdings. Sometimes holding an extra few acres would have compensated for the high rates, but the negative impact that unfree legal status could have on economic status must often have been resented.

The difference between free and unfree was not always clear cut. In Blackbourn where villein holdings tended to be irregular and they owed irregular services and rents, the unfree cannot have been a clearly identifiable group. Some of the *villani* in Great Ashfield owed no labour services at all, whilst others owed week works. In Ixworth

¹⁰⁴² Vinogradoff, *Villainage*, 218-20; Miller and Hatcher, *Rural Society*, 156; Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', 112-4; Faith, *Peasantry*, 201-65. Hilton argued that the decline in status was sudden, occurring in the last two decades of the 12th century: Hilton, 'Freedom', 3-19.

Thorpe the unfree peasants may have been more identifiable because their holdings and services were more regular, but even here there was some variety. By contrast, in Bunsty and Langtree unfree holding size and services tended to be regular in each vill, even across different manors. Thus, it is possible that the unfree would have been easily identifiable by their holdings and services. Even here, however, this varied from vill to vill. In Checkendon, Langtree, many of the free tenants held similar sized holdings for similar rents and light services; in Bunsty, over two thirds of freeholdings were the same size or smaller than the modal villein holding in their vill.

It was suggested in Chapter 2 that the division between free and unfree cannot have been all pervading in communities that had to labour alongside each other, attend church together, and fulfil administrative and policing obligations as a unit. It is no coincidence that legal status was barely mentioned in the exploration of communities and their obligations in Chapter 3. There were roles in the administration that unfree peasants were not allowed to fulfil, such as acting as hundred jurors. Some of the wealthiest tax payers in the Blackbourn returns to the 1283 lay subsidy were unfree,¹⁰⁴³ so they may have resented the reminder of their legal status when they were not called upon to serve in the king's courts. Nevertheless, unfree men fulfilled roles in manorial and vill administration that could give them influence and be profitable. Unfree men and women were obliged to pursue criminals, contribute to taxes and fines, and be considerate, active members of the local community as much as their free neighbours. The fact that so many aspects of medieval life can be considered without reference to legal status, suggests that its significance may have been overstated.

¹⁰⁴³ Bailey, *Suffolk*, 59-60.

Bailey has shown that villeinage in Suffolk was not heavily enforced, and across the country the economic burdens and restrictions of villeinage varied from manor to manor. The extent of villein land was variable, as were the dues and services expected of those who worked it, so it cannot have fulfilled the same role for all individuals and communities across the country.¹⁰⁴⁴ In his study of Broughton, Huntingdonshire, Britton chose not to draw a dividing line between free and unfree, stating that his 'primary concern' had been 'to establish how villagers actually lived, and to this end categories such as freedom and villeinage can contribute little.'¹⁰⁴⁵ Similarly, in her study of Rickinghall and Redgrave, Suffolk, Phillips came to the conclusion that the free/unfree divide was artificial, because she had found all sorts of interactions and overlaps between the two groups in terms of marriage, kin and roles in the manorial administration.¹⁰⁴⁶ The potential stigma of unfreedom and the economic disadvantages it could entail should not be underestimated,¹⁰⁴⁷ but nor should it be viewed as the defining factor of peasant experience. This is reinforced by the fact that in Bunsty, Langtree, Staine and probably Blackbourn, the majority of the tenanted land was free.¹⁰⁴⁸ The bewildering variety of terms applied to the unfree peasants in the Hundred Rolls suggests that status and tenure was complex. It is particularly significant that so many categories appear in the roll for Langtree hundred, which otherwise contains the most manorialised structures of any of the case study hundreds. If contemporaries were not satisfied with a simple free/unfree dichotomy, then we should not be satisfied with it either.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Bailey, 'Villeinage', 430-57; Bailey, *Serfdom*, 329-31, 337.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Britton, *Community*, 167.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Phillips, 'Collaboration and Litigation', 165-7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Bailey, *Serfdom*, 93-5.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 99-100.

It was stressed throughout Chapter 3 that the administrative units utilised in this study did not mark the limits of people's awareness. There is evidence of even low status peasants moving in networks that ignored hundredal boundaries. Therefore, the use of the hundred as the analytical unit in this study is necessarily artificial. If the hundred was relevant, it was probably more relevant for certain groups than others. As discussion in the final chapter moved from the smaller units of manor and vill up to the hundred, county and honour, the focus naturally moved from the peasantry through to substantial free men and knights, implying that the larger units would only have been relevant for wealthier individuals, whilst the manor and vill communities were made up of local peasants. To some extent this would have been the case. Wealthier men and women were more likely to hold land and be active in more than one place. Moreover, there was a higher threshold in terms of wealth and status required for service at hundred or county level than there was to represent the vill. It was shown that this was not always adhered to, as some men with very little land were called to serve as hundred jurors in the thirteenth century, but the majority held more than the average freeholder in their hundred.

However, even amongst these groups, most people seem to have formed relationships that centred on the locality of their main holding, rather than fostering associations with men of a similar status who lived in another part of the hundred or county. Some manorial lords would have had little presence in the manor or vill, since many employed bailiffs to act in their stead in the context of the manor and increasingly the upper levels of society had private chapels rather than attending their local church. The increasing administrative load would have meant that those of knightly status were regularly serving the king, and at times of war they would have had to provide military service: many of the manorial lords in this study served personally in the Welsh and Scottish

wars of Edward I's reign. But lords were not entirely removed from local society. Lower status lords would have presided over their own manor courts, and they continued to attend the local church.¹⁰⁴⁹ The greatest lords could be demanding, particularly if they had a concentration of manors in one region or a particular interest in the locality. St Edmunds' manorial lordship in Blackbourn was reinforced by jurisdictional lordship, the concentration of the abbey's manors in the liberty and proximity to the abbey itself.

Thus, there is evidence that from the smallest peasants to the greatest lords, people had interests that were both wider and narrower than the hundred. Nonetheless, the hundred was meaningful as a unit of administration, which must have given it a degree of coherence. The men called to act as hundred jurors, who included peasants and lesser manorial lords, were expected to provide information that concerned the entire hundred. Two electors had to select their fellow jurymen, implying that they knew the men were reliable and eligible to serve. The jurors knew that if they made errors they would be amerced, which may have encouraged them to take an interest in hundredal affairs more generally, in case they were later called to give account. These men had to be comfortable associating with men of different ranks; they had to liaise with the representatives of the villas as well as giving reports at county level. This hinge-group provided the link between the villas, the hundred, the county and the king's government more generally. Though most of their relationships were probably governed by convenience and personal choice, they were also active in hundredal affairs. Framing this study within hundredal units provided the opportunity to explore this under studied group in more detail. Most studies have tended to treat lords and peasants separately or have focused on sub-groups like the gentry. The first two chapters of this thesis also

¹⁰⁴⁹ Bailey, *English Manor*, 98; Saul, 'Gentry and the Parish', 254-60.

drew an arbitrary divide between ‘lords’ and ‘peasants’, whilst acknowledging that some of the lesser manorial lords were not far removed from the upper ranks of the manorial tenantry. Chapter 3 showed the overlap between the upper peasantry and the lower gentry, and illustrated the integral role this group played in the administration of the localities. Administrative service amongst this group was not entirely new, and similar types of men were probably called upon to act as jurors during the Domesday inquest.¹⁰⁵⁰ However, the increasing administrative burden and the declining number of knights meant that by the late thirteenth century, this administrative class contained men of lower status than before, and brought a wider group of people into contact with the king’s administration.

The hundred also proved a useful unit of analysis because it allowed local comparison of different villis in the same region, as well as wider comparison across the case studies. To some extent, this served as a check on the data collected; if individual villis or manors had been chosen instead, different conclusions may have been drawn. For example, a study of Ipsden, Langtree, would have found a dramatic increase in the recorded population from Domesday Book to the Hundred Rolls, whilst comparing the entire hundred showed that Ipsden’s expansion was anomalous in this part of Oxfordshire. Moreover, in Ravenstone, Bunsty, 70 percent of the arable was unfree, when across this hundred as a whole only 26 percent was, making it the freest region of Buckinghamshire represented by the surviving Hundred Rolls. When attempting to discover how different landscape challenges could impact upon the development of a settlement and the lives of the peasantry, it is important to compare like with like, as well as with different regions.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Williams, *English*, 87.

The hundred is a useful unit of analysis, so long as it is acknowledged that its inhabitants did not form an exclusive community, and its boundaries did not mark the limit of people's interests or awareness. As such, expanding this study to other hundreds would be a valuable exercise. The patchy survival of the Hundred Rolls would limit how far such a comparison could go. However, fragments of the Shropshire Hundred Rolls for Shrewsbury and Pimhill hundred survive as abbreviated copies in a nineteenth-century manuscript, enabling some comparison with a hundred in the west of the country.¹⁰⁵¹ None of the hundreds considered in this thesis were characterised exclusively by nucleated settlements, and all contained more free than unfree arable. Therefore, it would also be interesting to compare these case studies with a region characterised by structures that have been considered more 'typical': nucleated settlements, heavy manorialisation and high rates of villeinage.

Brief reference was made to developments beyond the thirteenth century, but detailed exploration of the impact of the famine and pestilence of the fourteenth century was beyond the scope of this thesis. As well as expanding geographically it would be worthwhile considering changes across the fourteenth century in each hundred; how communities were able to deal with and recover from each crisis could shed light upon how close they were to a crisis of subsistence at the end of the thirteenth century. This would be particularly revealing in determining the relationship between landscape and lordship in shaping the lives of the peasantry.

The lives of the peasantry were irrevocably intertwined with those of their neighbours and their lords. There was competition for land, work and space, particularly by the end of the thirteenth century, but also substantial amounts of cooperation. Over this period,

¹⁰⁵¹ Raban, *Second Domesday*, 172-5.

the increasing population in most regions made these issues more pressing, as did the increasing number of manorial lords making claims on the landscape. By the late thirteenth century, most peasant holdings were smaller and more fragmented; there was a vast population of near-landless peasants who were particularly vulnerable whatever their legal status. However, these difficulties were not experienced to the same degree in all regions. The peasantry lived and worked in communities that were fluid and changing, but the significance of those communities in terms of agricultural cooperation, support and shared resources should not be underestimated. They were also integral to the functioning of royal and seigneurial administration. Just as these communities were fluid and changeable, the inhabitants of the communities cannot be considered a monolithic group. Both within and across each case study, the clearest feature to emerge was variety of experience.¹⁰⁵² The wider interests of the lord, the landscape and local resources, the size and structure of a manor or vill, the size and coherence of the peasant community; all this combined to influence how settlements developed over time. This emphasises the importance of local studies and how they can contribute to the broader picture by illustrating the wealth of ways in which lordship, landholding and local society developed from Domesday Book to the Hundred Rolls.

¹⁰⁵² Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling*, 206-7.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bury A, B and C

Bury A opens with a description of its contents, and claims that it describes the lands held by the abbot and his men at the time that King William ordered his *descriptio* of the whole of England – surely referring to Domesday.¹⁰⁵³ References within the text to Abbot Baldwin, William Rufus and the death of William the Conqueror support the dating of this section to the late eleventh century, but as Bury A only survives in a later copy it is impossible to know if these references were contemporary or later additions.¹⁰⁵⁴ Bury A could be a copy of the entries relating to the abbot's fee in Little Domesday; it could be an abbreviated copy of a return made by the abbey and provided to the Domesday commissioners, so the abbot's fee would have been at least partly drawn from it; or, both Bury A and Little Domesday could have been copied from a shared source. Alternatively, Bury A could be a copy of returns from an independent survey of the abbey's lands, and thus unrelated to Domesday. The entries for Rickinghall in Blackbourn are compared below to establish the relationship between the two texts.

Suffolk Domesday, the lands of St Edmunds:

Richingehallam tenuit Sanctus Eadmundus tempore regis edwardi pro manerio ii carucatas terrae. Tunc iiii villani modo ii et semper vi bordarii. Semper ii carucae in dominio et tunc i caruca hominum modo dimidia caruca. Molendinum hiemale. Tunc iiii servi modo ii et viii acrae prati. Silva Lx porcis et modo ii runcinus et viii animalia et xvi porci et xxiiii oves et xxx caprae et xxii sochemanni de dimidia carucata terrae. Semper inter eos vi carucae et vi acrae prati. Hi sunt sancti commendatio et saca et omni consuetudine. Necumque potuerunt dare vel vendere terras suas sine licentia. Ad faldam omnes. Tunc valuit hoc manerium v libras modo vii. In eadem ii liberi homines de dimidia caruca terrae. i bordarius. Semper ii carucae et ii acrae prati. Silva de viii porcis. Hi potuerunt dare et vendere terras suas. Sed saca et commendatio remanet sancto et fuerint. Semper valet x solidos. Ecclesia de xxiiii acris liberi terre in elemosina. Habet in longo i leugam et in lato iii quarentanas et in gelt' xii d.¹⁰⁵⁵

Bury A:

*Ad Ricingeale ii carucatas terre et ii villanos et vi bordarios et xxii sochemannos de dimidia carucata terre et ii liberos de dimidia carucata terre.*¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁵³ *FD*, 3.

¹⁰⁵⁴ For example: *FD*, 3, 9.

¹⁰⁵⁵ LDB 364v-365 (Suffolk, 14,75).

¹⁰⁵⁶ *FD*, 7.

Bury A provides the basic information contained within Domesday: the demesne of the abbey, with *villani* and *bordarii*; the number of sokemen and their lands; and the number of free men and their lands. From this core the only information that is different or missing, is the one bordar on the free men's land in Domesday that is not mentioned in Bury A. The entry does not contradict Domesday in any way, but simply fails to record many details.

In twenty-three of thirty-three entries in Bury A that refer to Blackbourn/Bradmere, the information matches Domesday exactly, albeit as an abbreviated version. On four occasions in addition to the Rickinghall example above, Bury A does not mention any bordars where Domesday does, and on one occasion Bury A lists one fewer bordar than Domesday. Seven sokemen with forty acres in Hinderclay are included in Domesday, but not Bury A. On one occasion Bury A lists six sokemen where Domesday lists seven and on another it lists fourteen free men rather than Domesday's twenty-four. On two occasions, Bury A describes men as sokemen that were described as free men in Domesday.

These ten variations are relatively minor, and otherwise there is nothing within these entries to suggest that Bury A is independent from Domesday. The villas are even listed in the same order that they appear in Domesday. As Domesday contains extra information missing from Bury A, such as the seven sokemen in Hinderclay, it seems less likely that these similarities can be accounted for by concluding that the Domesday scribe drew upon Bury A. Instead, Bury A was probably a copy of Little Domesday itself, or a shared source. Minor errors and variations in terminology support this supposition. In Ixworth, Domesday lists five *homines* held by Robert Blund from the abbot, rather than *liberi homines* or *sochemanni*. This is also the case in Bury A. Whilst this could denote a genuine difference in status, it is significant that Bury B states that Robert held five *liberos*. It therefore seems likely that the word *liberi* was accidentally omitted, and this minor error was copied by the Bury A scribe along with the rest of the information.

However, though the Blackbourn/Bradmere information is substantially the same, Douglas has shown that at other points in Bury A the scribe used independent

phraseology and inserted new information that could not have been drawn from Domesday.¹⁰⁵⁷ It cannot be denied that the scribe must have followed a copy of Domesday, or at least shared a mutual source with Little Domesday, yet it seems he was not a ‘mere copyist’ at all times.¹⁰⁵⁸ With this in mind, it makes the differences between the figures in Bury A and Domesday more significant, as it becomes possible that they were corrections or updates, rather than scribal errors.

A comparison of Bury B with Domesday is more problematic because it is structured by subtenant rather than tenant-in-chief. It is difficult to identify all of the subtenants’ lands with Domesday, meaning that Douglas’ attempt to print the corresponding section of Domesday alongside is not always successful. The first subtenant to be mentioned in Bury B who held lands in Blackbourn or Bradmere was Fulcher. In Domesday he held from the abbot in Barnham, Hepworth, Thelnetham, Hopton and Knettishall.¹⁰⁵⁹ With only slight variance these holdings are all included in Bury B, though there is also an additional holding of sixty acres in Bardwell attributed to Fulcher.¹⁰⁶⁰ Generally there are subtle differences between Domesday and Bury B:

Suffolk Domesday, the Lands of the Abbot of St Edmunds

*In Thelsthan (Thelnetham) tenet Fulcher de abbate viii liberi homines de i carucata terrae vi bordarii, i servum...*¹⁰⁶¹

Bury B

*Ad Thelnetham tenet idem [Fulcher] Lxxx acras terre et ii bordarios et viii liberos de xL acris.*¹⁰⁶²

In both entries, Fulcher held eight free men and the total of 120 acres in Bury B is probably the equivalent of one carucate. However, in Bury B the lands are divided, so Fulcher held eighty acres with two bordars, and the eight free men had forty acres. In contrast, the Domesday entry implies that the free men held the whole carucate from

¹⁰⁵⁷ *FD*, li-lv.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Welldon Finn argued that the original version of this section was probably the return provided to the Domesday inquiry. The surviving twelfth-century copy is a heavily abbreviated version: Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, 96-7.

¹⁰⁵⁹ LDB 365v, 366v, 367v (Suffolk, 14,78; 80; 89-90; 99).

¹⁰⁶⁰ *FD*, 17-8.

¹⁰⁶¹ LDB 366v (Suffolk, 14,90).

¹⁰⁶² *FD*, 17-8.

Fulcher. There are numerous similar examples of Bury B providing a break-down of lands that were listed as one in Domesday. This is because Bury B aimed to record subtenancies where Domesday was more concerned with tenants-in-chief. Relatively few of the entries provide exactly the same information as Domesday: often there is a slight difference in acreage or the numbers of peasants on the land, or even whole subtenancies that were not mentioned within Domesday, for example Odard in Stowlangtoft and Burcard in Stanton.¹⁰⁶³ Bury B also clarifies the identity of some Domesday subtenants. Peter de Valognes held as a subtenant of the abbey in six villis in these hundreds in Domesday, on three occasions being called Peter de Valognes, but on the other three just being called 'Peter'.¹⁰⁶⁴ It would be reasonable to presume that the Peter holding one carucate from the abbot in Culford was the same man.¹⁰⁶⁵ However, Bury B shows that this was in fact Peter Dapifer, who also held from the abbot in other hundreds. Though some of the information in Bury B may have been drawn from Domesday or sources produced during its compilation, the extra information and the greater number of subtenancies within Bury B shows that B was substantially independent from the government survey.

For those subtenancies not mentioned in Domesday at all, it is possible that they were newly established after the Domesday survey was completed. This would support Douglas' view that this information was compiled during Abbot Baldwin's rule, as it would be later than Domesday but not substantially so, as many of the same men were holding in both Bury B and Domesday. Therefore, Bury B must have been compiled after Domesday, but within a few years of the survey.

Where some similarities can be seen between the contents of Bury A and B and Domesday, Bury C contains information that could not possibly have been drawn from the Domesday survey. The information in Bury C is grouped by hundred and by vill. The below entries are for the vill of Ixworth Thorpe:

¹⁰⁶³ *FD*, 19.

¹⁰⁶⁴ As Peter: LDB 366v, 367v (Suffolk, 14,85; 96-7). As Peter de Valognes: LDB 365v-366 (Suffolk, 14,78; 81-2).

¹⁰⁶⁵ LDB 364 (Suffolk, 14,70).

Ad Thorpe

Langlif ii acras et i d.

Alfah et Cole i acram et dimidiam et i d.

Stanard iii acras et dimidiam et ii d.

*Uluric iii acras et dimidiam et ii d.*¹⁰⁶⁶

There were two entries for Ixworth Thorpe in the abbot's fee in Domesday. The first describes the abbot holding two free men with sixteen acres of land.¹⁰⁶⁷ The second mentions nine free men with one carucate, and one free man with sixty acres, all of which was held by Robert Blund as a subtenant.¹⁰⁶⁸ Five named individuals holding four holdings that totalled 10.5 acres cannot be directly equated with any of the free men in either Domesday entry. Douglas felt that a clear parallel could be drawn between the names and acreages in Bury C and that of the free men and sokemen in Domesday, but this is not the case with the Blackburn material; where the numbers were not comparable, Douglas argued that this could be explained by the fact that Bury C is fragmentary and incomplete. However, there is substantial correlation between the late twelfth-century *Kalendar* and Bury C, so Bury C should not be dismissed as incomplete.

A Comparison of Domesday Book, Bury C and the <i>Kalendar</i>									
Vill	Free men and sokemen			Acreage			Values/Payments (<i>d</i>)		
	LDB	Bury C	<i>Kalendar</i>	LDB	Bury C	<i>Kalendar</i>	LDB	Bury C	<i>Kalendar</i>
Troston	12	34+	14+	180	113	320	120	145.5	138.7
Honington	16	12	12	120	29	30	?	37.0	36.0
Langham	7	10	9+	120	48	40	120	64.0	42.0
Hunston	3	3	4+	60	20	21	60	26.0	22.0
Elmswell	5	12+	5+	40	41.5	40	?	40.5	40.0
Walsham-le-Willows	20	15	10+	120	48	40	60	65.0	40.0
Wattisfield	20	28	32+	60	59	60	120	80.0	80.0
Hepworth	20	18	16+	150	46.5	20	120	67.5	28.0
Hinderclay	7	12	4+	40	59	59	?	79.0	70.0
Ixworth Thorpe	2	5	1+	16	10.5	?	12	6.0	10.0
Barningham	10	6	?	?	32	30	60	19.0	20.0
Coney Weston	12	17	16+	90	59	60	?	80.0	80.5
Hopton	23	25+	39+	180	101.5	80	120	138.0	88.0
Total	157	197+	172+	1176	667	800	792	847.5	695.2

¹⁰⁶⁶ *FD*, 41.

¹⁰⁶⁷ LDB 367 (Suffolk, 14,91).

¹⁰⁶⁸ LDB 367v (Suffolk, 14,101).

Though some figures are close, in others the difference is greater, and there is no correlation between the numbers: at times Bury C records more names than would be expected, and at times fewer.

The lack of correlation between the information in Domesday and in Bury C has led historians to conclude that Bury C is the return of a later survey of Bury's peasants. Lennard and Davis have shown that it must have been compiled before 1119.¹⁰⁶⁹ Indeed, except for the fact that it was copied into a later manuscript with Bury A and B, there is nothing within Bury C itself to support an association with Domesday Book or an eleventh-century date. It seems much more likely that it was compiled in the early twelfth century, so the tenants it lists were holding a generation after the Domesday peasants.

Other than the fact that Bury A, B and C were all copied into a later manuscript together, there is little to indicate that they were the returns of one project. Bury A substantially copies from Little Domesday, though at times the scribe included additional information, showing that he was not a 'mere copyist'. Bury B rearranges the Domesday information and provides considerable additional information, but much of its contents can still be identified with Domesday entries. Bury C is entirely independent of Domesday, and probably refers to those holding a generation after Domesday. It is possible that Bury A and B were originally conceived as part of one project, as this would make Bury A's omission of all subtenants more explicable, because their lands were dealt with in Bury B. By contrast, Bury C is probably the returns of a separate endeavour. The other two sections appear to be complete and clearly planned, whilst this section is more fragmentary. Moreover, the copy in the abbey's fourteenth-century *Pinchbeck Register* only includes Bury A and B but not C.¹⁰⁷⁰ Whilst this is not conclusive in itself as many of the records in the *Pinchbeck Register* were abbreviated or just included extracts, it could be indicative.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Lennard showed that it must have been compiled before the death of Abbot Ailbold in 1119. Davis agreed, because a man named Athelstan holding thirty acres at Ampton was recorded in Bury C but had died by 1119. Lennard, *Rural England*, 359, 359n; *Kalendar*, xxxviii. See also: Welldon Finn, *Eastern Counties*, 99-101.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Pinchbeck*, i, 410-21.

Appendix B: The size of a virgate and hide/carucate in each case study

There is generally presumed to be thirty acres to a virgate and four virgates to a hide/carucate. This assumption is not supportable across the country as a whole, and there can even be variety in neighbouring settlements. Below, details of the ‘average’ virgates used throughout this study and the evidence for them are presented for each hundred.

Blackbourn Double-Hundred

Virgates do not appear in any of the surveys for Blackbourn, instead acres and carucates are used. Douglas felt that the 100 acre carucate was prevalent in East Anglia, but Maitland, Davis and Campbell stated that a carucate generally contained 120 *ware* acres.¹⁰⁷¹ The below table refers to Thedwastry hundred, one of the eight and a half hundreds of Bury’s liberty. Occasionally in the *Kalendar* entries provide both acres and carucates, and the table compares these units.

Number of acres per carucate in Thedwastry hundred in Abbot Samson’s *Kalendar*

Vill	Carucates	Acres	Acres per carucate
Timworth	1.5	165	110
Pakenham	2	247	123.5
Thurston	1	125	125
Hesset and Beyton	1	120	120
Hesset and Beyton	1	120	120
Hesset and Beyton	1	60	60
Hesset and Beyton	1	75	75
Hesset and Beyton	1	135	135
<i>Viherhalc</i> (Drinkstone)	0.5	60	120
Woolpit	1	120	120
Rougham	1	90	90
Rougham	1	130	130
Rougham	1	90	90
Rougham	1	120	120
Great Whelnetham	1	122	122
Rushbrook	2	254	127
Total	18	2,033	112.9

The mean carucate in Thedwastry in the *Kalendar* contained around 113 acres, but even within some vills there was variety. The majority of the figures are relatively close to the ‘normal’ 120 acre carucate, falling between 110 and 130 acres, and 120 is the modal figure occurring five times within the sample. Douglas’s 100 acre carucate does not occur once.

¹⁰⁷¹ *DBB*, 483; *Kalendar*, xxxii; Campbell, ‘Hundreds and Letes’, 162.

A comparison of the *Kalendar* with Bury C provides further evidence of a 120 acre carucate.

Bury C:

*Ad Timworde: Syric lx acras et v solidos et iiii denarios. Frebern lx acras et v solidos et iiii denarios.*¹⁰⁷²

The *Kalendar*:

*Alexander filius Reginoldi tenet dimidiam carucatam et est terra illa Hugonis filii Walteri privigni sui; et Johannes filius Benedicti tenet dimidiam carucatam et reddunt hii duo x sol. et viii d per annum...*¹⁰⁷³

It cannot be proven that these are the same pieces of land, but the same amount of money was being paid at each point, suggesting that they were. This is significant in showing stability of payments over a century, but also what is potentially the same piece of land is described in one survey as 60 acres and in another as half a carucate.

In Blackbourn double-hundred there are also suggestive examples in the *Kalendar*. For example, John held a third of a carucate in Little Livermere, also described as forty acres.¹⁰⁷⁴ In Hepworth, Thurston and his brothers held twenty acres, described as the third part of half a carucate.¹⁰⁷⁵ In Elmswell, the free men held forty acres, ‘namely the third part of a carucate’.¹⁰⁷⁶ In Langham, there was two thirds of half a carucate (so one third of a carucate), and the remaining third of that half carucate (one sixth of a carucate) was in Hunston. The third in Langham was divided into six holdings which added up to forty acres; the sixth in Hunston was held in three pieces equalling twenty one acres, so this half carucate contained sixty-one acres.¹⁰⁷⁷

Some figures can be compared between Little Domesday and Bury B. Fulcher held a carucate from Abbot Baldwin in Domesday in Thelnetham, and in Bury B it was described as 120 acres.¹⁰⁷⁸ In Hopton he held half a carucate in Domesday, described as

¹⁰⁷² *FD*, 35.

¹⁰⁷³ *Kalendar*, 7.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Kalendar*, 43.

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Kalendar*, 46.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Kalendar*, 46.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Kalendar*, 48-9.

¹⁰⁷⁸ LDB 366v (Suffolk, 14,90); *FD*, 17.

sixty acres in Bury B.¹⁰⁷⁹ His carucate in Hepworth was recorded in two pieces of ninety acres and thirty-six acres respectively, a total of 126 acres.¹⁰⁸⁰ Peter de Valognes's half carucate in Bardwell in Domesday was recorded as sixty acres in Bury B.¹⁰⁸¹ Many subtenancies cannot be identified in both Domesday and Bury B and where they can the acreages do not always correlate, but these entries are suggestive.

Though the 120 acre carucate was clearly not universal in Blackburn and the surrounding region, it is the only figure that regularly occurs in the documents, and most other figures are relatively close. Therefore, where necessary a mean figure of 120 acres per carucate has been adopted in the analysis of Blackburn.

Langtree Hundred

Kosminsky presumed a virgate of twenty-five acres rather than thirty in Oxfordshire, because of evidence that virgates were smaller in this county.¹⁰⁸² Almost all of the documents referring to Langtree hundred use virgates and carucates or hides, so there is less opportunity to directly compare acres and virgates and test this hypothesis. Robert de Vere held six virgates in Crowmarsh in the Hundred Rolls, and his father Hugh's *IPM* (1264-5) records that he had held 173 acres there in demesne.¹⁰⁸³ However, William de Warenne's *IPM* of 1287-8 records just 140 acres in demesne.¹⁰⁸⁴ If referring to the same piece of land, these two *IPMs* together with the Hundred Rolls would variously suggest 28.8 acres per virgate and 23.3 acres per virgate. John de Chausey's *IPM* (1313) records 193 acres demesne in Mapledurham, where there were two carucates in the Hundred Rolls, suggesting a carucate of just under 100 acres.¹⁰⁸⁵

On only one occasion is the size of a hide in this hundred explicitly described. In Goring, the Hundred Rolls describe the abbot of Eynsham holding one hide, and this is then clarified by stating that it contained 100 arable acres.¹⁰⁸⁶ The Hundred Rolls generally use the term carucate in Langtree, except when referring to lands held in free

¹⁰⁷⁹ LDB 365v (Suffolk, 14,80); *FD*, 17.

¹⁰⁸⁰ LDB 365v (Suffolk, 14,78); *FD*, 17.

¹⁰⁸¹ LDB 366 (Suffolk, 14,82); *FD*, 24.

¹⁰⁸² Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 88.

¹⁰⁸³ *RH*, ii, 774a; TNA C132/31/1, calendared at *CIPM*, i, 586.

¹⁰⁸⁴ TNA C133/47/2, calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 633.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *RH*, ii, 778b; TNA C134/29/5, calendared at *CIPM*, v, 392.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *RH*, ii, 778a.

alms, or ancient tenures. This could suggest that this example is not representative of the rest of the land in the hundred. Nonetheless, as the only explicit reference to the acreage of one of these larger units, it cannot be ignored. Following this entry, and the implication of the *IPMs* that a hide/carucate may have been around 100 acres, an average of 100 acres per carucate will be presumed in Langtree hundred. Though this is based on less evidence than Blackbourn, this average has less significance in this hundred as virgates and larger units are used almost exclusively in all of the surviving evidence, so a conversion to acres is rarely required.

Bunsty Hundred

The virgate in Bunsty appears to be smaller than in the other hundreds. This is suggested immediately by a comparison of the villas described in acres in the Hundred Rolls with the villas described in virgates. If each virgate contained thirty acres, then the peasants in these villas held much more land and paid much less per acre than their neighbours whose lands were described in acres. This is feasible, and could even explain why the different units were used, but it requires further investigation.

Kosminsky presumed a thirty acre virgate in Bunsty, but in Chibnall's studies of north-east Buckinghamshire, he stated a virgate tended to contain twenty-five acres in this region.¹⁰⁸⁷ Of the ten villages and two hamlets described in the Bunsty roll, two villages and one hamlet provide measurements in hides and virgates, one uses both virgates and acres, and the rest just use acres and or/roods. All of the villages show a tendency towards 'standard' holding sizes, particularly amongst the unfree holdings. Where virgates were used, most of the *villani* held half virgates and some held full virgates. There was variety across the villages that gave measurements in acres, but general uniformity within each village.

K. Bailey has suggested that the regular acreages in each village could indicate the size of a virgate there.¹⁰⁸⁸ This would mean that those in Hanslope holding nine acres had half-virgates, and those with eighteen acres had full virgates. In Little Linford, the virgate was exceptionally small, as each five acre holding represented half a virgate. If

¹⁰⁸⁷ Kosminsky, *Agrarian*, 88; Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington*, 165-6.

¹⁰⁸⁸ K. Bailey, 'Economy and Society in Medieval Buckinghamshire: The Hundred Rolls 1254-1280', *Buckinghamshire Papers*, 7 (2006), 21-5.

this is the case, the ‘average’ virgate in this hundred would have been small, ranging from ten to eighteen acres. This would have two major implications: one, that the vast majority of peasants in this hundred held at least half a virgate; and two, that the ‘acres’ in this hundred were probably large and fertile – what seem to be small, unviable holdings are in fact larger and more suitable for a family’s needs than the low figures suggest.

However, it is also possible that the regular holding sizes represent quarter and half virgates, rather than half virgates and full virgates, bringing the virgate size in this hundred closer to the standard averages that are generally followed. This seems particularly likely in Tyringham: holdings of six and a quarter acres and twelve and a half acres are suggestive of proportions of a twenty-five acre virgate, rather than being half and full virgates respectively. Unfortunately, there is no statement within the Bunsty roll to suggest the size of a virgate or hide. John Giffard’s 1274 *IPM* states that there were nineteen virgates of villeinage in Tyringham which rendered 18s per virgate.¹⁰⁸⁹ The Hundred Rolls state that 230 acres were held in villeinage. Chibnall laments that this proves the Hundred Rolls should not be trusted. Following the *IPM* he estimated that there should have been 475 acres of villeinage, based on each of the nineteen virgates being twenty-five acres.¹⁰⁹⁰ If however, rather than dismissing the total of 230 acres in the Hundred Rolls, this total is divided by nineteen this would give a virgate of just over twelve acres. Could this suggest that the twelve and a half acre holdings were virgates rather than half virgates as Chibnall presumed? The *IPM* goes on to identify eleven peasants who along with their land were assigned to John Giffard’s widow as dower. Chibnall stated that all of those named who can be identified in both the Hundred Rolls and the *IPM* were holding less in the former document than in the latter. This once again relies on the virgate in this vill being twenty-five acres however. Of the five people who can be identified, four held a half virgate in the *IPM* and one held a full virgate; the former each held six acres and one rood in the Hundred Rolls, whilst the latter held twelve and a half acres. Rather than seeing this as ‘misrepresentation’ is it not possible that the virgate in Tyringham was instead unusually small: twelve and a half acres rather than twenty-five acres?

¹⁰⁸⁹ TNA C133/7/6, calendared at *CIPM*, ii, 83.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington*, 165-6.

Two *IPMs* compiled for the village of Little Linford can also be compared with the Hundred Rolls. The first was compiled in 1267 and the second in 1302.¹⁰⁹¹ The first *IPM* states that eleven virgates of land were held in villeinage, and in total including rents, works and other services they rendered £4 7s 4½d. In the Hundred Rolls, twenty-two *villani* each held five acres, a total of 110 acres. If each of those five acre holdings were small half-virgates, the figures tally with the *IPM*. What is more, the total rents and services paid by these *villani* was £4 19s – relatively close to the total given in the *IPM*. By 1302 eleven and a half virgates were held in villeinage, again relatively close to the Hundred Rolls figure if a virgate of ten acres is accepted. In Hanslope, the modal villein holding in the Hundred Rolls was nine acres; in total there were 360 acres of villeinage, the equivalent of twenty eight acre holdings. An *IPM* of 1298 states that there were twenty-one virgates of villeinage, close to the Hundred Rolls total if a virgate of eighteen acres is accepted for this vill.

What these few examples show, is that rather than dismissing the Hundred Rolls as being misrepresentative, the virgate in this region may have been unusually small. What they do not show, is how best to compare the villages that use virgates with those that use acres, as the three examples above each suggest a different sized virgate: ten acres, twelve and a half acres, and eighteen acres respectively. What is more, in some other villages it may not be correct to follow this model. That eleven *villani* held six acres in Ravenstone and twenty-seven held twelve acres, could, if a virgate was twelve acres, suggest that the majority in this village were well off. By contrast, if the modal holding represented a half virgate as elsewhere, then none of these peasants held a full virgate, and those with six acres just held a quarter virgate.

What seems certain is that the ‘standard’ virgate of twenty-five or thirty acres should not be applied. If the smaller holding size in each village is considered a half virgate, the ‘average’ half virgate across the villages is approximately seven acres.¹⁰⁹² If in Ravenstone the larger holding size is a half virgate, this raises the average to just over eight acres.¹⁰⁹³ Where necessary, an average of eight acres per half-virgate will be presumed, because this mean figure comes closer to the modal holding size of nine

¹⁰⁹¹ TNA C132/34/10; C133/106/8, calendared at *CIPM*, i, 656, 685; iv, 109.

¹⁰⁹² The mean figure is 6.79 acres; the median 6.25; the modal 9 (occurring 86 times), closely followed by 6 (occurring 83 times).

¹⁰⁹³ The mean figure is 8.28 acres; the median is 9; the modal 9 (occurring 86 times).

acres. Using either of these figures is problematic, as none of the unfree holdings in this hundred were either seven or eight acres, so the 'average' seems unlikely to represent any actual holdings. Moreover, concluding that the acreages in these villages represent virgates remains tenuous; the existence of such small virgates could help to explain some relatively small demesne acreages in the hundred, but makes others seem surprisingly large. But generally it is more common to find small virgates in river valleys, and Bunsty was situated in a valley. It seems better than applying estimates of an 'average' virgate that are not supported by the available evidence at all.

All of the above averages are employed cautiously throughout this study, but wherever possible like is compared with like, rather than converting acres to virgates and hides and vice versa.

Appendix C: Domesday geld Allocations grouped by leet in Blackbourn and Bradmere

Leet Number	Vill	Hundred in DB	Geld in DB	Leet Total
1	Stanton	Blackbourn	34½d	34½d
2	Bardwell	Blackbourn	34¼d	34¼d
3	West Stow	Bradmere	17d	34¼d
	Norton	Blackbourn	17¼d	
4	Wordwell	Blackbourn	7½d	26½d
	Culford	Bradmere	7¼d	
	Little Fakenham	Blackbourn	0 d	
	Barnham	Bradmere and Blackbourn	11¾d	
5	Great Fakenham	Bradmere and Blackbourn	24d	41¼d
	Sapiston	Bradmere and Blackbourn	17¼d	
6	Ingham	Bradmere	16d	30½d
	Little Livermere	Blackbourn	3¼d	
	Troston	Blackbourn	11¼d	
7	Hepworth	Bradmere and Blackbourn	17¼d	34¼d
	Honington	Blackbourn	12½d	
	[Ixworth] Thorpe (Half)	Bradmere and Blackbourn	4½d	
8	Ixworth	Bradmere and Blackbourn	22¾d	34d
	Elmswell	Blackbourn	11¼d	
9	Hunston	Blackbourn	9¾d	34¼d
	Langham	Bradmere and Blackbourn	10d	
	Stow[Langtoft]	Blackbourn	10d	
	[Ixworth] Thorpe (Half)	Bradmere and Blackbourn	4½d	
10	Ashfield I	Bradmere and Blackbourn?	11¾d	34¼d
	Ashfield II	Bradmere and Blackbourn?	5½d	
	Walsham [le-Willows]	Bradmere and Blackbourn	17d	
11	Rickinghall [Inferior]	Blackbourn	12d	34¾d
	Wattisfield	Bradmere and Blackbourn	17¼d	
	Hinderclay	Blackbourn	5½d	
12	Thelnetham	Blackbourn	9¼d	34¼d
	[Market] Weston	Blackbourn	9d	
	Hopton	Blackbourn	16d	
13	Barningham	Bradmere and Blackbourn	17d	34¼d
	Coney Weston	Blackbourn	17¼d	
14	Rushford	Bradmere	11¼d	34¼d
	Knettishall	Blackbourn	11½d	
	Euston	Blackbourn	11½d	
Total Blackbourn			£1 7s 9d	
Total Bradmere			£0 11s 10½d	
Overall total			£1 19s 7½d	

Appendix D: The Domesday Estates of Engelric the Priest

Vill	Shire	1066 holder	1066 Lord	1086 TIC	1086 subt	Hides	TRE Value
<i><u>Demesne Estates</u></i>							
Gravesend (in Tilsbury)	Essex	Engelric	Harold	Count Eustace	-	1	£0 10s 0d
Iltny	Essex	Engelric	-	Count Eustace	-	2	£1 10s 0d
Orsett	Essex	Engelric	William bishop of London	Count Eustace	-	1	£1 0s 0d
Langenhoe	Essex	Engelric	-	Count Eustace	-	7	£12 10s 0d
Birch Hall	Essex	Engelric	William bishop of London	Count Eustace	Robert	3	£3 0s 0d
Little Finborough	Suff.	Engelric	-	Count Eustace	-	2.5	£2 4s 0d
Buxhall	Suff.	Engelric	-	Count Eustace	-	1.5	£2 0s 0d
Dunsley	Herts.	Engelric	-	Count of Mortain	A widow	0.2	£0 2s 0d
Dunsley	Herts.	Engelric	-	Mainou the Breton	-	0.2	£0 2s 0d
Tring	Herts.	Engelric	-	Count Eustace	-	39	£25 0s 0d
Newnham Murren	Oxford.	Engelric	-	Miles Crispin	-	10	£12 0s 0d
Total						67.4	£59 18s 0d
<i><u>Lands held of Engelric in dependent tenure</u></i>							
Pendley	Herts.	Eadgifu the nun	Engelric	Count of Mortain	-	2	£2 0s 0d
Gubblecote	Herts.	Eadgifu	Engelric	Count of Mortain	Fulcold	1.5	£2 0s 0d
Wigginton	Herts.	Godwine, man of Engelric	Engelric	Count of Mortain	Humphrey	3.2	£2 10s 0d
Total						6.7	£6 10s 0d
<i><u>Lands held by Engelric's Commended Men</u></i>							
Little Finborough	Suff.	7 free men	Engelric	Count Eustace	-	0.25	£0 6s 0d
Total						0.25	£0 6s 0d
<i><u>Engelric's TRW annexations</u></i>							
Langenhoe	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	2	£3 12s 0d
Langenhoe	Essex	3 free men	-	Count Eustace	-	0.5	£0 18s 0d
Tring	Herts.	2 sokemen	Oswulf son of Frani	Count Eustace	-	2	-
Tring	Herts.	1 man	Abbot of Ramsey	Count Eustace	-	5	-
Stanway	Essex	Bricteva	Harold	King William	-	0.15	£0 2s 0d
Writtle	Essex	Harold	-	Count Eustace	-	2	£12 0s 0d
Lawford	Essex	Harold	-	Count Eustace	-	4	-
Land in Winstree Hundred	Essex	2 free men	King Edward	Count Eustace	-	0.75	-
Fobbing	Essex	22 free men	-	Count Eustace	-	15.6	£12 0s 0d
Shortgrove	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	1.25	£2 0s 0d
Claret Hall	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	0.1	£0 10s 0d
Belchamp	Essex	2 free men	-	Count Eustace	-	0.25	-
Steeple Bumpstead	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	0.03	-
Maldon	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	St Martin's London	1.75	£4 0s 0d
Maldon	Essex	2 free man	-	Count Eustace	St Martin's London	0.5	£1 0s 0d
Uleham's Farm	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	Robert	1	£0 14s 0d
Donyland	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	0.5	£0 5s 0d
Great Birch	Essex	Eadric	-	Count Eustace	Hugh	3	£6 0s 0d
Colne	Essex	Aelfric Bigga	-	Count Eustace	Robert	0.3	£1 10s 0d
Stanford Rivers	Essex	Leofwine	-	Count Eustace	-	9	£24 0s 0d
Stanford Rivers	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	0.3	£0 5s 0d

Stanford Rivers	Essex	Aelfric's Father	-	Count Eustace	Aelfric	1.6	£2 0s 0d
Laver	Essex	Leofwine	-	Count Eustace	-	1.3	£8 0s 0d
Laver	Essex	Alwine	-	Count Eustace	-	1.3	£8 0s 0d
Laver	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	Ralph	0.3	£0 10s 0d
Fyfield	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	Richard	0.1	-
Newland Hall	Essex	Harold	-	Count Eustace	Mauger	3	£5 0s 0d
Little Baddow	Essex	Leofwin	-	Count Eustace	Lambert	5	£5 0s 0d
Runwell	Essex	Leofstan	-	Count Eustace	Lambert	1	£1 0s 0d
Runwell	Essex	Eadgifu	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	4	£5 0s 0d
Little Waltham	Essex	Leofstan	-	Count Eustace	Lambert	2.25	£2 10s 0d
Boreham	Essex	14 free men	-	Count Eustace	Lambert	8.2	£12 0s 0d
St Osyth	Essex	Edward	-	Count Eustace	-	3.3	£12 0s 0d
Frinton	Essex	Earl Harold	-	Count Eustace	Ralph de Marcy	3	£3 0s 0d
Little Holland	Essex	Leofstan	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	4	£6 0s 0d
Lawford	Essex	Aelfric	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	2	£10 0s 0d
Lawford	Essex	3 free men	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	0.75	£1 0s 0d
Chrishall	Essex	3 free men	-	Count Eustace	-	0.1	£0 2s 0d
Chishill	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	Anselm	0.5	£0 10s 0d
Elmdon	Essex	Almær	-	Count Eustace	Roger de Somery	14	£16 0s 0d
Elmdon Lee	Essex	Beorhtwulf	-	Count Eustace	Roger de Somery	2.5	£4 0s 0d
Crawleybury	Essex	Leofsige	-	Count Eustace	Roger de Somery	0.25	£0 10s 0d
Bendysh Hall	Essex	Leodmær the Priest	-	Count Eustace	-	4.5	£11 0s 0d
Newnham Hall	Essex	Alsige	-	Count Eustace	-	1	£11 0s 0d
Little Bardfield	Essex	Northmann	-	Count Eustace	Adelulf	2.25	£8 0s 0d
Shopland	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	5	£6 0s 0d
Shopland	Essex	1 free man	-	Count Eustace	-	0.75	-
Total						121.93	£206 18s 0d

Appendix E: Churches in Blackburn/Bradmore in Domesday Book

Vill	Churches in Domesday	Vill	Churches in Domesday
Ashfield	2	Langham	1
Bardwell	1	Little Fakenham	0
Barnham	0.5	Little Livermere	1
Barningham	1	Market Weston	2
Coney Weston	1	Norton	1
Culford	0	Rickinghall	1
Elmswell	1	Rushford	0
Euston	0	Sapiston	0.5
Great Fakenham	2	Stanton	2.25
Hepworth	1	Stowlangtoft	1
Hinderclay	1	Thelnetham	1
Honington	1	Troston	0
Hopton	1	Walsham-le-Willows	0.5
Hunston	0.5	Wattisfield	1
Ingham	1	West Stowe	1
Ixworth	1	Wordwell	1
Ixworth Thorpe	0	Wyken	0
Knettishall	1		
Total		30.25	

Appendix F: Mills in Blackburn/Bradmere, Bunsty and Langtree in Domesday Book

Vill	Hundred	TIC	Subtenant	Mills	Renders (£)	Renders (eels)
Bardwell	Blackbourn	St Edmund	Burcard	0.5	-	-
Barnham	Bradmere	Earl Hugh	-	1	-	-
Barnham	Bradmere	Roger Bigod	Stanheard	1	-	-
Barnham	Blackbourn	St Edmund	-	1	-	-
Euston	Blackbourn	St Edmund	Adelund	2	-	-
Great Fakenham	Bradmere	Peter de Valognes	-	1	-	-
Hopton	Blackbourn	St Edmund	?Fulcher	1	-	-
Ingham	Bradmere	St Edmund		1	-	-
Ixworth	Bradmere	Robert Blund	-	1	-	-
Ixworth	Bradmere	Robert Blund	-	1	-	-
Ixworth Thorpe	Blackbourn	St Edmund	?Robert Blund	1	-	-
Ixworth Thorpe	Bradmere	Sasselin	-	1	-	-
Knettishall	Blackbourn	St Edmund	Fulcher	1	-	-
Knettishall	Blackbourn	William de Parthenay	-	0.5	-	-
Market Weston	Blackbourn	Robert de Verly	-	1	-	-
Rickinghall	Blackbourn	St Edmund	-	1	-	-
Sapiston	Blackbourn	St Edmund	Peter de Valognes	2	-	-
Sapiston	Bradmere	Sasselin	-	1	-	-
Stowlangtoft	Blackbourn	St Edmund	Durand	1	-	-
Thelnetham	Blackbourn	Frodo	-	1	-	-
Wordwell	Blackbourn	St Edmund	-	1	-	-
Wyken	Bradmere	Robert Blund	-	0.25	-	-
Gayhurst	Bunsty	Odo of Bayeux	Gilbert Maminot	1	£0 13s 0d	-
Hanslope	Bunsty	Winemar the Fleming	-	1	£0 12s 0d	-
Haversham	Bunsty	William Peverel	-	1	£0 8s 0d	75
Lavendon	Bunsty	Bishop of Coutances	William	1.5	£1 7s 0d	250
Lavendon	Bunsty	Count of Mortain	Humphrey	1	£0 10s 0d	50
Little Linford	Bunsty	Bishop of Coutances	Eadgifu	1	£0 8s 8d	-
Olney	Bunsty	Bishop of Coutances	-	1	£2 0s 0d	200
Ravenstone	Bunsty	Walter Giffard	Hugh	1	£1 5s 0d	-
Crowmarsh Gifford	Langtree	Walter Giffard	Hugh de Bolbec	2	£2 0s 0d	-
Goring	Langtree	Robert d'Oilly	-	1	£1 0s 0d	-
Gatehampton	Langtree	Miles Crispin	-	1	£0 11s 0d	-
Little Stoke	Langtree	Alfred nephew of Wigot	-	1	£1 0s 0d	-
Mongewell	Langtree	Earl William fitzOsbern	Roger de Lacy	2	£2 5s 0d	-
North Stoke	Langtree	Miles Crispin	-	2	£1 0s 0d	-
Whitchurch	Langtree	Miles Crispin	-	1	£1 0s 0d	-
Blackbourn/Bradmere total	-	-	-	22.25	-	-
Bunsty total	-	-	-	8.5	£7 3s 8d	575
Langtree total	-	-	-	10	£8 16s 0d	-
Total	-	-	-	56.25	£15 19s 8d	575

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JUST1/	80; 81; 82; 84; 86	Cambridgeshire Eyre Rolls
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SC5/	Bucks/Tower/3	1279-80 Bunsty Hundred Roll
	Cambs/Tower/8	1279-80 Staine Hundred Roll
	Oxon/Tower/4a	1279-80 Langtree Hundred Roll
SC6/	957/27	Checkendon Manorial Account Roll
SC6/1118/	17; 19; 20; 21; 22	Whitchurch Manorial Account Rolls

The British Library

Add MS	40063	Redgrave Hall papers, including extracts of Rickinghall Court Records
Add Roll	63378; 63379; 63380; 63381 63397; 63400; 63401; 63402 63440	Rickinghall Manorial Court Rolls Rickinghall Manorial Account Roll

Cambridge University Library

Add MS	6006	<i>Liber de Consuetudinibus monasterii S Edmundi</i>
MS	Ee iii 60	<i>The Pinchbeck Register</i>
	Mm iv 19	<i>The 'Black Book' of Bury St Edmunds</i>

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